COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

VOLUME 6

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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF
ERASMUS

LETTERS 842 TO 992

1518 TO 1519

translated by R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson

annotated by Peter G. Bietenholz

University of Toronto Press

Toronto / Buffalo / London

The research and publication costs of the
Collected Works of Erasmus are supported by the
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
(and previously by the Canada Council).
The publication costs are also assisted by
University of Toronto Press
www.utppublishing.com
© University of Toronto Press 1982
Toronto / Buffalo / London
Printed in Canada

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Erasmus, Desiderius, circa 1466–1536.
Collected works of Erasmus
Contents: v. 6. The correspondence of Erasmus,
letters 842 to 992, 1518 to 1519 / translated by
R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson; annotated by
Peter G. Bietenholz.
ISBN 0-8020-5500-1 (v. 6)
1. Erasmus, Desiderius, circa 1466–1536.
I. Mynors, R.A.B., 1903– II. Thomson, D.F.S.,
1919– III. Bietenholz, Peter G., 1933–
IV. Title.
PA8500 1974 876′.04 C74-6326-X

Collected Works of Erasmus

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Contents

Illustrations
x
Preface
xiii
Map showing the principal places mentioned in volume 6
xxi

LETTERS 842 TO 992
1

Table of Correspondents
414
Works Frequently Cited
418
Short-Title Forms for Erasmus' Works
421
Index
425

Illustrations

Erasmus *Novum Testamentum* title page
40
Letter from Johannes Thurzo, Epistle 850
44
Tomb of Marcus Musurus
60
Catherine of Aragon
64
Udalricus Zasius
68
Letter from Udalricus Zasius, Epistle 857
70
Autograph letter, Erasmus to Udalricus Zasius, Epistle 859
92–3
Galen *De sanitate tuenda* title page
100
Marsilio Ficino
102
Sigismund I of Poland
104
Ulrich Varnbüler
116
View of Speyer
122–3

Johannes Draconites
135
Johann von Staupitz
136
Silver Klappmütztaler, c 1500–10
138
Helius Eobanus Hessus
140
Justus Jonas
144
Wolfgang Faber Capito
146
Johann Rudolfinger
154
View of Aachen cathedral
170
Erasmus *Argumenta in omneis epistolas apostolicas nova* preface
172
Martin Luther *Ad Leonem X* title page
192
Andreas Rudolph Bodenstein of Karlstadt
224
T. Livius ... historicus duobus libris auctus title page
254

Ulrich, duke of Württemberg and Teck
262
Ulrich von Hutten *Triumphus Doc. Reuchlini* title page
264
Artus Gouffier
266
Jacobus Latomus (Jacques Masson)
284
Johannes Fabri (Heigerlin)
328
Charles de Croy (d 1527)
334
Franz von Sickingen
400

Preface

The first letters in this volume appear to have been written during Erasmus' journey from Louvain to Basel in May of 1518. Riding an English horse[1] over highways that were far from safe,[2] he went to Basel to assist his publisher and friend Johann Froben during the crucial phases in the production of his revised New Testament.[3] A great deal was at stake. Through the long months of relentless toiling over the text, the notes, and the translation, he had increasingly formed the conviction that he stood at a turning point in his life. The new edition was to be his lasting contribution to the scholarly foundations of the Christian faith; it had to be bold and uncompromising. Once it was in the hands of the public, he could face the approach of old age more calmly, 'singing to himself and the Muses.'[4] Meanwhile, during the summer months spent at Basel he continued to work harder than was good for him and was plagued by ill heath.[5] In September, on the way home to Louvain, the English horse 'simply gave up,' and Erasmus himself fell gravely ill. For four weeks he lay recovering in the house of his other publisher-friend, Dirk Martens. Physicians came and went; two of them, he tells us, diagnosed bubonic plague. As he lay recovering he produced a brilliant account of his homeward journey and his ensuing illness.[6]

By the middle of October he felt well enough to return to his rooms in the College of the Lily and to serious work. The New Testament finally came off the press, and so did lesser publications related to the great work.[7] He did not leave Louvain except in the spring of 1519 for brief visits to Mechelen,[8]

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[1] Epp 785:51n, 867:30–2

[2] Ep 829

[3] Ep 864 introduction

[4] Cf CWE 5 preface.

[5] Epp 847, 860

[6] Ep 867

[7] Epp 894, 916, 956

[8] Ep 926 introduction

Antwerp,[9] and Brussels.[10] But the outward impression of normality that prevails to the end of June, when the last letters in this volume were written, may be deceptive. Experienced astrologers agreed that these were troubled times and pointed to a heavenly cause for human problems.[11] International politics would sometimes stir Erasmus' interest and also his emotions.[12] From July to October, Maximilian I held a diet at Augsburg which was to be his last. Other issues apart,[13] negotiations in Augsburg concerned a papal request for funds in support of a crusade against the unrelenting Turks[14] – a request that aroused the flames of German national sentiment.[15] Moreover the electors' choice of a successor for the ageing emperor was discussed both openly and in private, Maximilian himself having done his share to involve such foreign powers as England and France in addition to his Hispano-Burgundian grandsons, Charles and Ferdinand.[16] Of Erasmus' friends, Pace,[17] Hutten,[18] and Budé[19] were all involved in diplomatic negotiations concerning the imperial succession. The pace of the negotiations quickened after the death of Maximilian on 12 January 1519,[20] which also prompted a war between Ulrich of Württemberg and the Swabian League and led Hutten, the knight, to brandish his sword as well as his pen.[21] The question of Erasmus' own return to active court duties was raised when Prince Ferdinand arrived from Spain and required a tutor. Erasmus declined the position and recommended his new friend, Juan Luis Vives.[22]

There were other worries affecting Erasmus' daily life at Louvain. The Collegium Trilingue progressed, and as it did so it began to arouse the hostility of the conservative theologians and brought Erasmus himself into conflict with some of their leading representatives,[23] while at the same time it heightened his interest in the progress of the new learning in such universities as Erfurt, Wittenberg, Oxford, and Cambridge.[24] No longer did he write, with amused excitement, about being co-opted into the theological faculty.[25] In many ways Louvain still proved congenial, but once again he was becoming restless. In the spring of 1519 he sensed among the diehard theologians a conspiracy directed against his person and his work,[26] and explored with renewed determination the conditions and rewards that might await him if he were to move to London[27] or Paris.[28] He came to believe that his problems in Louvain were centred around an Englishman, Edward Lee, who was preparing an attack upon his New Testament – a frivolous and alarming scheme to jeopardize Erasmus' historic gift to his age. He was determined to cut through this web of elusive opposition spreading from Louvain to England[29] and Germany,[30] but only succeeded in escalating the conflict by bringing Lee to the attention of his international readership, albeit without mentioning a name.[31] He privately appealed for help to his friends in England,[32] while Lee broke off all channels of communication with the Erasmian camp.[33] Irritation on both sides was growing to the point of obsession. In the next volume the reader of Erasmus' correspondence will witness the climax and virtual end of the controversy with Lee and will also better understand the issues at stake, which in retrospect can hardly be judged to be fundamental.

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[9] Epp 934:10n, 964 introduction
[10] Epp 970–1
[11] Ep 948:19ff
[12] Epp 927:10, 954
[13] Ep 916 introduction
[14] Ep 854, 868
[15] Epp 860, 863 introductions, 891
[16] Epp 893:36–44, 917 introduction
[17] Epp 968 introduction
[18] Ep 744:52n
[19] Ep 924
[20] Epp 915:176–7, 926 introduction
[21] Epp 923, 986
[22] Epp 917, 927
[23] Epp 934, 946

Fundamental issues were raised, however, by Erasmus' residence in a town which contained the sole university of the Hapsburg-Burgundian Netherlands and was internationally reputed to be a bastion of orthodox theology. Luther's Ninety-five Theses on indulgences, purgatory, and papal authority led to a flurry of pamphlets and widespread discussion. In Louvain, as elsewhere, the immediate attention and often enthusiastic response given to Luther's ideas lent new emphasis to the question whether Erasmus' own work might have, or indeed was already having, an equally harmful effect: both were innovators, and both insisted that a good deal needed to be changed in the traditional ways of society and the church that controlled it in so many respects. Those who two years earlier had opposed

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[24] Epp 871, 939–42, 965, 967, 978–80
[25] Ep 637:12n
[26] Epp 930, 946, 948
[27] Epp 886, 964 introductions
[28] Ep 926:37n
[29] Ep 898A introduction
[30] Ep 972
[31] Epp 843, 897
[32] Epp 886, 936, 973–4
[33] Epp 922, 960

Erasmus' New Testament could now hardly fail to oppose Luther too, and to condemn both men in one breath.[34]

Erasmus reacted angrily[35] but was not yet alarmed.[36] In fact he had little reason to be alarmed until the winter of 1519–20, when Luther's heterodoxy became clear beyond doubt, and conservative Christians everywhere began to perceive the tares in their midst and wonder whether it was not Erasmus who had sown the seeds. For the time being, however, Erasmus was prepared to commend Luther, at least in certain quarters,[37] and more generally to defend his right to be critical of the church. It is true that he perceived in Luther's writings a radical commitment which differed from his own[38] and therefore decided that their causes would have to be kept apart – hence his endeavours to suppress the *Julius exclusus*[39] and to prevent his own publishers from printing Luther's works[40] – but his overriding conviction at this time was that he and Luther were both in their separate ways part of the great intellectual and spiritual renewal triumphantly manifest in so many places.[41]

Although his earliest letter to Luther, Ep 980, was promptly printed in Germany without his knowledge, there is little evidence to indicate that at the time he wrote it Erasmus did not himself intend to publish it. He did in fact publish it in the *Farrago* of October 1519, adding Luther's Ep 933, to which Ep 980 was the reply, although Ep 933 had not otherwise been published in Germany. Since Luther's appearance lent a new kind of spiritual and patriotic vigour to the various circles of German humanists, the cult of Erasmus as a hero of German letters became an integral part of that new enthusiasm. Saxony was a centre; during the breaks between academic terms pilgrims set out for Louvain from the University of Erfurt, specifically to set eyes on Erasmus.[42] Some of the messages and gifts they brought came from Frederick the Wise, elector of Saxony, and his chancellor, Spalatinus. Cultural politics were assuming a new significance with the impending election of a new emperor. The tremendous electoral campaign launched by the house of Hapsburg now rendered the dynastic union of Austria and Burgundy, of Germany and the Netherlands, real and positively exciting,

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[34] Epp 938:5n, 948, 961:36–9; cf CWE 7 preface.
[35] Epp 946, 948
[36] Ep 968:21n
[37] Epp 872, 939, 947
[38] Epp 967, 967A, 980, 983
[39] Ep 961:42n
[40] Ep 904:20n
[41] Epp 872, 947
[42] Epp 870, 963, 1122 introduction, 1462

whereas in the days of Maximilian it had for the most part remained theoretical and patently ineffectual. And it was not only in Saxony that cultural politics were important. The young archbishop of Mainz, who was also the titular of two Saxon sees, the chancellor of Erfurt University, and a recent convert to the Hapsburg party, had taken Ulrich von Hutten into his service. It could be expected that he shared Hutten's enthusiasm for Reuchlin and Luther,[43] and it was evident that he shared his admiration for Erasmus.[44]

Erasmus' response to the new spring of German humanism was, on the whole, remarkably positive. How positive it was would not be fully demonstrated until the publication of his *Farrago* and other writings of the period of 1519–20.[45] Right now his approbation was reflected in the addition of Ep 858 to Froben's edition of the *Enchiridion* – a move designed to heighten its appeal to the German public – and in the fact that letters to and from Germany account for the greatest share by far of the correspondence contained in this volume.[46] The new climate is also reflected in the wide circulation of the *Julius exclusus*, especially in Germany.[47] In the light of his private statements such as those in Ep 872 it is questionable whether Erasmus was quite as upset about the success of the dialogue as his published statements profess.

In the case of some of the issues mentioned so far the reader of this volume will see no more than the proverbial tip of the iceberg and will have to speculate upon the immense preoccupation they caused Erasmus and the amount of time he was prepared to spend on them. This applies equally to a fundamental issue like Erasmus' new contacts with Luther and the reactions they provoked in Germany and Louvain and to a predominantly personal one like the conflict with Lee. A very different situation arises as the reader turns to the tortuous friendship between Erasmus and Guillaume Budé. Half a dozen major letters[48] and a handful of shorter ones in CWE 5–6 offer very nearly the complete record of a dramatic, even critical, phase in the relationship between the two scholars. There is too much uneasiness in their letters for their stabs to be passed off simply as a display of wit and brilliance.

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[43] Ep 1033

[44] Epp 986, 988

[45] Cf Ep 1009 introduction, CWE 8 preface.

[46] This volume comprises 152 letters, of which 59 are exchanged with German correspondents (including Alsatian and Swiss), 36 with Netherlanders, 23 with Englishmen, 16 with Frenchmen, 10 with Italians, and 8 with correspondents from other nations.

[47] Epp 785:42n, 849:32n, 877:12–13

[48] Epp 744, 778, 810, 896, 906, 915

One's judgment on the issues concerned will depend on the importance one is prepared to attach to style as against substance. To readers who are able to take matters of style as seriously as did the two protagonists and their admirers, these letters will appear significant; other readers may find them taxing, a display of endless, if elegant, bickering over points of little weight. It does not appear that then or later the opinions of Erasmus and Budé clashed over such issues as politics or religion; even their assessments of Erasmus' controversy with Lefèvre d'Etaples do not offer evidence of a profound difference of opinion. At the very least, however, these letters will help the reader to appreciate the importance a well-turned Latin phrase had for Erasmus and his friends. To fathom an expression down to the last shade of implied meaning or be able to imply at one's discretion another meaning within the limits of correct Latin was a skill they greatly admired and assiduously perfected. It was a skill both men used in a constant, and possibly novel, effort to explore and define the subtle recesses of their own personality as well as the other's.

The 152 letters contained in this volume are, as always, only part of Erasmus' correspondence at the time. These letters make specific reference to 41 others now missing, and how many more vanished without trace it is impossible to say. For volumes 3 to 5 of this edition the Deventer Letter-book[49] has been an essential source of letters sent and received that Erasmus did not choose to release to his publishers, although he had them copied into the letter-book by his amanuenses. When he went to Basel he took the Deventer book with him because he intended to publish a new collection of his correspondence, and some more letters were recorded in it both at Basel and after his return to Louvain. But Ep 895 of 25 October 1518 is the last text in this edition that is derived from the Deventer book. As its contributions cease the character of the surviving correspondence changes substantially. From that point on the majority of letters known today were published by Erasmus and his associates either in various collections of his correspondence[50] or as prefaces and appendixes to some of his own writings and other books; most were printed in his lifetime and were therefore widely known to his contemporaries. The few letters published by modern scholars from scattered manuscript sources cannot always be relied upon to provide continuous insight into Erasmus' daily life and the thoughts and experiences he desired to keep private. To mention one example, very little is revealed in this volume about Erasmus' financial transactions, in sharp contrast to the

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[49] Cf Allen I, appendix 8.

[50] Cf Allen I, appendix 7.

preceding volume, where the Deventer book provided more than half the letters. While in the past not all the letters were copied into the Deventer book, either by accident or by design, and while hereafter a number of indiscreet remarks and trivial notes will continue to be found, from this point on there are appreciably fewer unedited and spontaneous letters than in the preceding volumes.

The termination of the Deventer Letter-book is also reflected in the composition of this volume. In addition to the last 17 letters derived from the Deventer book, no more than 20 others were preserved in manuscript only until they were published by scholars of a more recent period. This leaves 115 letters out of a total of 152 that were published in the sixteenth century: 6 in the *Auctarium*,[51] 81 in the *Farrago* of October 1519, 5 more in later collections, and 23 elsewhere, for the most part in Erasmus' lifetime. Of these only Ep 939 can perhaps be assumed to have been published against Erasmus' wishes, while in the case of Ep 980 an earlier version printed in Germany differs in one important point from the edited version in his *Farrago*. As in the past, P.S. Allen's chronology for letters lacking dates and his attributions for letters lacking addresses have for the most part been accepted. Allen's Ep 705, however, is in this edition Ep 902A, his Ep 912 is here Ep 898A, and his Ep 985 is Ep 967A. Finally, a new addressee is suggested for Ep 880.

The procedure established in preceding CWE volumes, by which readers are informed of the date by which each letter first appeared in print, has been retained here. For letters published in contemporary collections of Erasmus' correspondence, the introduction cites the earliest such collection to print the letter in question. For letters published elsewhere in Erasmus' lifetime, the first edition is cited as well. Where manuscript sources exist, these are also cited provided they carry any weight. When no sources are indicated in the introduction, the letter was copied into the Deventer Letter-book and first published in LB. If a manuscript source alone is cited, the letter was first published by Allen or before him by another scholar of modern times. Where printed letter collections are described by short titles, a full reference is given among the Works Frequently Cited. The footnotes dealing with currency have been supplied by John H. Munro.

The index to this volume, prepared by James Farge CSB, contains references to the persons, places, and works mentioned in the volume, following the plan for the correspondence series. When that series of

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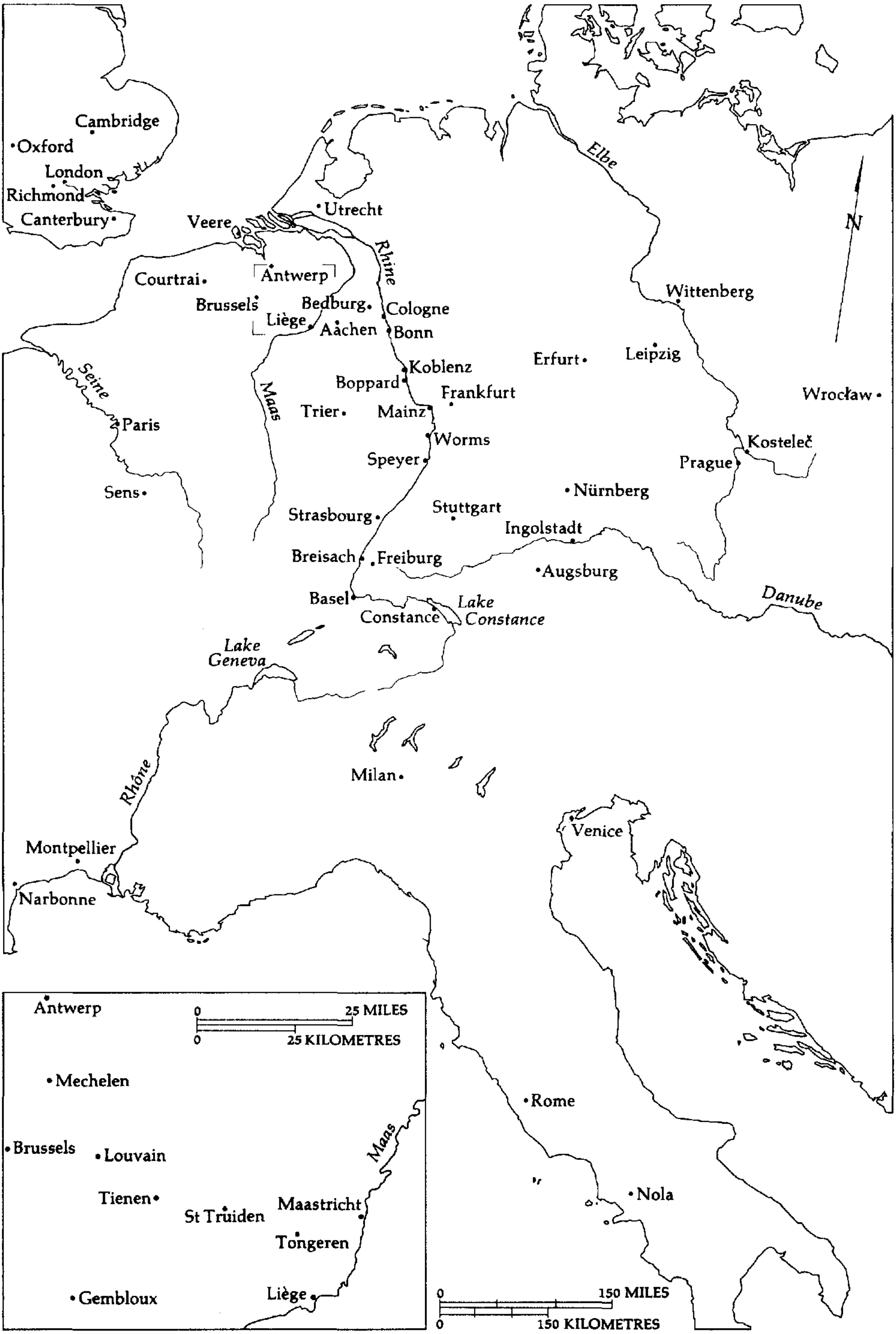
[51] Ep 886:57n

volumes is completed the reader will also be supplied with an index of classical and scriptural references. A Biographical Register will supplement the biographical information found in the annotation to the letters.

The letters in this volume were translated by R.A.B. Mynors. My notes for this volume and the preceding one were compiled during a year of sabbatical leave for which I wish to record my gratitude to the University of Saskatchewan. I also wish to thank the Warburg Institute, University of London, and the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel for hospitality and assistance on many occasions. Finally it should be recalled that the Collected Works of Erasmus could not have been undertaken without the generous assistance of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

PGB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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF ERASMUS

LETTERS 842 TO 992

842 / To Helias Marcaeus [Cologne? 1518?]

At an undetermined date after June 1517 there appeared in Cologne a slim volume with a set of gory illustrations. It contained a text known from the Septuagint, where it is included as book 4 of Maccabees; in the Cologne edition it is, perhaps wrongly, attributed to Josephus and entitled Περὶ *αὐτοκράτορος λογισμοῦ, hoc est de imperatrice ratione liber, a D. Erasmo Roterodamo diligenter recognitus ac emendatus* (Cologne: E. Cervicornus, n d). The author uses the story of the Maccabean brothers to illustrate the maxim that human emotions can be mastered with the help of reason. This letter was printed as a preface to the Cologne volume, which also included some extracts from Fathers and other authors about the Maccabees and a letter to Marcaeus from Magdalius Jacobus of Gouda, a Cologne Dominican, 1469–1520 (cf NNBW). Magdalius' letter offers the only date to be found in this volume; it is dated 5 June 1517.

Helias Marcaeus was a native of Jülich (cf ADB). Besides teaching in the Cologne faculty of arts, he was the warden of the convent of Benedictine nuns which possessed the relics of the Maccabees (now in St Andrew's church, Cologne) and took its name from them. He was apparently collecting texts about the Maccabean martyrs, and Magdalius' letter drew his attention to Josephus. Allen suggested that in early May, when Erasmus was passing through Cologne on his way to Basel (cf Ep 843 introduction), the book may have been in preparation and that Erasmus may have obliged his friends by checking either a manuscript or the proofs and by composing this preface. The book may, however, have been published at any time after June 1517. It need not have been in or near Cologne that he looked through the text; and if it was, it could have been while returning to Louvain, when he was resting for five days with Neuenahr (cf Ep 867:79–81). However that may be, he used this letter to relate the popular cult of relics to his own devotional ideals.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE MOST WORTHY AND LEARNED FATHER HELIAS MARCAEUS OF THE COMMUNITY OF MACCABEANS, WARDEN OF THEIR MOST HONOURABLE CONVENT, GREETING

I have pleasure in dedicating to you, most worthy Father, the slight work of a single day, in which I have revised and (so far as I could) corrected Josephus' book on the martyrdom of the seven Maccabean brethren and their valiant mother. I wish I could have returned a more satisfactory answer to your wishes; but I had no Greek text at hand, and had to make several changes (but not a great number) by reconstructing the Greek out of the Latin. There is much truth in Josephus' assertion that in his command of Greek he has

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842

10 Josephus' assertion] Josephus *Antiquitates Judaicae* 20.11.263

reached remarkable heights of eloquence; one can see this even from the present small book, in which he displays a singular vigour and abundance of style, so that one feels he has matched a noble deed with splendid utterance. No wonder St Jerome singles this out for special praise as a 'very elegant' book, and Suidas calls it 'most excellent.' From these two authors I have restored the corrupted title Περὶ αὐτοκράτορος λογισμοῦ (*On the sovereign rule of Reason*), for the message of the narrative is that reason can produce any effect in human beings, once it has mastered their desires. The story is to be found in the books of Maccabees, which the Hebrews list among the sacred books, although they do not receive them into the canon.

Personally I regard your convent, which is famous on many other grounds as well, as being especially fortunate in its possession of such an outstanding treasure. In fact, I think the whole city of Cologne is to be greatly congratulated: blessed as she is in so many ways, in none is she more so than in providing a home for so many and such remarkable documents of true religion. More blessed still will she be, if she learns to reproduce the virtues of those whose relics she enshrines, and not only holds their bodies but preserves their way of life: imitating in the sincerity of her religion the piety of the Three Kings, emulating in her sobriety of life the purity of the Eleven Thousand Virgins which made them worthy of martyrdom, and by an unbroken constancy of spirit recalling those heroic Maccabees and that invincible heroine their mother. And what is more, this ampler share of blessedness she can bestow upon herself, or double what she has.

Continue then as you have begun: throw light upon the martyrs' glorious history, and so make their courageous example more familiar and your city's fame more brilliant, more inspiring. Farewell.

843 / To Maarten Lips [On the Rhine?], 7 May 1518

Erasmus left Louvain c 1 May. He may have travelled through Liège (Ep 867:198–9), certainly visited Cologne (Epp 842, 846:4, 852:91–2), and then continued for some distance by boat on the Rhine (line 15). He may then have

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14 St Jerome] *De viris illustribus* 13 (PL 23:662)

15 Suidas] An immense Greek lexicon called 'The Suda,' compiled in the tenth century AD, and printed by Aldus in 1514. Erasmus, who thought Suidas was the compiler's name, makes much use of it in the *Adagia*. This entry is I 503.

29 Three Kings] Their relics had been in the cathedral of Cologne since 1164.

30 Virgins] The legend of St Ursula and the eleven thousand (originally just eleven?) virgins developed from the eighth century around a historical kernel dating from the fourth or fifth century. St Ursula is the patron saint of Cologne. The cult, which was highly popular at the time, centred upon the basilica erected in her honour.

passed through Colmar (AK II Ep 616:22–3), and arrived in Basel on 13 May (Epp 847–8).

In this letter Erasmus resumed a controversy destined to remain one of his major concerns throughout the fifteen months covered by this volume (see the preface). The letter answered criticisms of Erasmus' New Testament made by Edward Lee (see Ep 765 introduction), an English scholar then at Louvain, and a future archbishop. Lee's critical notes were brought to Erasmus' attention by Maarten Lips, an Augustinian canon (see Ep 750), who was friendly with both men. This letter was evidently composed for quick publication in the *Auctarium* (cf Epp 861 introduction, 886:57n) and may never have been sent to Lips. Although Lee's name was not mentioned and Lips' name appeared only in the *Opus epistolarum* of 1529 (in the salutation as well as in lines 734, 750), a hint at the critic's British origin (lines 88–9) was no doubt enough to enlighten Louvain's academic community and others who knew Erasmus well. Some people, however, guessed wrongly (see Ep 844 introduction). Lee himself was bound to conclude that Erasmus had made the first step towards publicizing their controversy, and that in insulting language. It is no wonder that Lee returned to the attack with fresh zeal; cf Epp 898A, 936:34–6.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO MAARTEN LIPS, GREETING

Do you not think me exceptionally fortunate? There comes to me unasked a blessing which other men scarcely obtain by great effort and expense: everyone offers to instruct Erasmus. And so of necessity, unless I am a mere blockhead, I must some day make progress. In one point, however, I may be thought somewhat unlucky: most of my would-be teachers play the part of hostile critics rather than instructors. Some of them have as their object not to make me a better scholar or a better man, but by joining battle with me to earn, they hope, some pittance of reputation for themselves. All are furious, none more so than those who can teach me absolutely nothing. They are like some schoolmasters, always shouting and clouting and flogging the boys' skin off their backs, and can teach nothing for all that except bad grammar, which they will soon have to unlearn. The man whose pamphlet you have sent me is one of these; it is so illiterate that I could hardly endure to read it, so comical that I could not fail to, though I kept it for a journey by boat. I should be as mad as he is if I tried to answer such malicious falsehoods. But I

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15 journey by boat] The date suggests that Erasmus composed his answer as he read the letter; cf line 695 and the general lack of exact references, careful argumentation, and organization.

will scribble a word of comment on each chapter of his nonsense, in such a way that, if you like, they can actually be numbered.

1. First of all then, having assured us that ten acute conclusions have validated his constatation (his whole style is gay with such blossoms as these), he assumes as generally accepted that the version of the New Testament now in common use is Jerome's, though it is known to be neither Cyprian's nor Hilary's nor Ambrose's nor Augustine's nor Jerome's, for he has different readings; much less is it the version which he tells us he has corrected, for things are found in it which he condemns, in respect not only of the wording but of the sense. And this is the base of his theological argument.

2. He imagines, and assumes as proved, that I publicly correct and alter the Vulgate text, whereas I leave that intact and untouched and have turned into Latin what is found in the Greek copies, pointing out as I go along the agreements or disagreements of our own text; not seldom preferring what is in these copies of ours, correcting anything corrupt, explaining ambiguities, elucidating obscurities, and changing anything that is notably barbarous in expression, because I understand that very many people are so disgusted by the prodigious errors (which however are nearly always the translator's work and not the authors') that they cannot bring themselves to read the Scriptures. Nor for that matter have all mortals such an iron digestion that they can endure the style of it. But if we simplify our language for the benefit of ignorant and simple folk, should we not help educated readers too by purifying the language? In any case, if this critic of mine wishes nothing whatever to be published that differs from the Vulgate text in common use, it will not be lawful to publish the New Testament in Greek as the Greeks use it, unless it has first been corrected against our published Vulgate, for fear that someone will detect some disagreement. Who is mad enough to say any such thing? We must do away forthwith with St Ambrose's version or paraphrase, whichever it is, of the Pauline Epistles, which differs extensively from our version; we must do away with Jerome's too, which differs from it in a number of places. And then most of our manuscripts must be done away with, because as a rule they differ among themselves. Observe too the disagreement between your friend and Augustine, whom he seems to think

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23 Jerome's] Following a commission by Pope Damasus I, from 382 Jerome revised the Latin New Testament in the light of Greek texts. Later he translated the Old Testament anew from the Hebrew. In the 'Apologia' prefixed to the 1516 edition of his New Testament Erasmus had correctly pointed out that Jerome was the editor rather than the translator of the New Testament; cf LB VI f**2 recto.

no one else has read. Augustine declares that he has actually been helped by the difference between copies, since what is obscure in one version is more clearly rendered in another; we cannot all do all things. This man supposes that all confidence in Scripture is brought to an end, if the difference in reading is made public, and would rather the most manifest blunders were left in the sacred text than that two or three foolish old men who are hard to please should take offence. Yet St Jerome was not in the least deterred from this line of enquiry by the fact that the change of some small word or other in the prophet Jonah made almost the whole population rebel against their bishop, and pours scorn on those gods so dependent on gourds who are shaken by so small a change, although Augustine had written and told Jerome the story as though it were a serious matter. Why, let that severe critic of yours answer me just this one question: should we wish on behalf of God's church that she should read the books of Holy Scripture in a truly accurate text or no? If he admits that it is desirable, let him tell us whether he admits that sundry errors are imported into those books every day by the ignorance of correctors or the negligence of scribes. If this cannot be denied, why does he not welcome these efforts of mine, which contribute more than anything else to the double object of mending corruptions and preserving from corruption what is correct? For there is no denying that there are corruptions in most of our manuscripts – in fact, in almost all. Then let him tell us whether it is important that the Scriptures should be correctly understood or no. If he thinks it is important, why does he condemn my efforts, which have explained so many passages that even he, learned as he is, never understood before? Let him read my work through and deny if he can that what I say is true.

3. He says that many people have tried to undermine and do away with the Vulgate text, some to add elegance of style, others to exclude error, but that all attempts have failed. Is the man not ashamed of such palpable

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51 Augustine declares] See the beginning of the *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* 1 (CC 33:1); *De civitate Dei* 11.19.

53 all things] Virgil *Eclogues* 8.63; *Adagia* II iii 94

59 Jonah] In Jonah 4:6 God provides some shade for the weary prophet in the form of a common plant – a gourd, according to the Vulgate. In Jerome's translation the plant was an ivy, and Augustine reported that this unaccustomed word, when used by a bishop, had caused a disturbance among his flock in the city of Oea. In his reply Jerome tried to clarify the nature of that plant for which Latin apparently had no name; see Jerome's Ep 112.22, in reply to Augustine's Ep 71 (CSEL 34:253, 322; 55:392).

nonsense? Let him produce one person who has tried this – unless perhaps he will put forward the sole name of Lefèvre.

4. He writes that among all the Latin and Greek scholars who abound in Paris and Germany and England and Scotland no one has dared to attempt this, although Lefèvre has lately made the attempt, criticizing this edition of mine and carping at it here and there.

5. And who can fail to see how openly false it is to say that in these countries there are so many men skilled in Latin and Greek? – especially in Scotland, while of Italy he says nothing. This makes me suspect that the man is a Scot.

6. Then what is more foolish than this line of argument? 'In Paris there are a great many learned philosophers; it is therefore forbidden for this or that individual to attempt any innovation in philosophy.' Let there be many thousands of them: even so one person must make a start. And none the less I suppose that in all that multitude I am not absolutely last, as far as knowledge of the two tongues is concerned.

7. He says that Lorenzo was the start of the trouble; as though Lorenzo had translated the New Testament, or Jerome had not done the same thing long before his time.

8. Then he is most foolishly indignant because I subject Christ's words to the rules of Donatus – just as though Christ had spoken in the exact words used by our translator. On the contrary, as it is known that the apostles wrote Greek, though not very correctly, I have not changed a single letter in the language they used; much less have I wished to bring Christ's words under the rule of law.

9. It is ridiculous too to make me responsible for the rules of grammar, as though it were I who am the authority for good Latin, rather than authors who wrote before the birth of Christ.

10. 'Erasmus reckons this decree unworthy,' says he. Quite the contrary: it is the papal decretals which lay down that a document shall be

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81 Lefèvre] Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples; cf Ep 315 introduction.

84 Lefèvre] In his commentary on the Pauline Epistles he had criticized an interpretation in Erasmus' New Testament of 1516; see Epp 597:37n, 765.

89 Scot] Cf Allen Ep 993:17.

97 done the same thing] As Lorenzo Valla; cf above line 23n and Ep 182.

100 Donatus] The grammar of Aelius Donatus was so popular in the Middle Ages that his name came to connote grammar in general.

109 decretals] Cf 'Apologia' (LB VI f**2 verso; Ep 373:19–20). Erasmus was probably recalling *Decreta* part 1 distinctio 9 chs 3–6 in the *Corpus iuris canonici.* This quotes Augustine admitting errors in his own works and insisting that, in order to be authoritative, the text of Scripture must be freed from errors, using

rejected as spurious if a manifest blunder is detected in it, and another decree carefully legislates for public instruction in the three ancient languages as being essential for the understanding of Scripture.

11. His standard for the purity of Latin is ancient usage, as Augustine wrote; as though I used any other standard, or the translator wrote in the style of his Ancients. The next thing, I suppose, will be a demand that we should all adopt his own flowers of style.

12. And all through this discussion he confuses elegance of language, which is a question for grammarians, with eloquence and with poetic style, as though there were no difference, and asserts that the way we should express ourselves depends entirely on the precedent of Holy Scripture, finding fault in passing with all those sainted authors whose writing is most unlike the example set by the language of the apostles. If we are not allowed to write in any other fashion, how dare he write this stammering stuff himself and use so many monstrous expressions, none of which is to be found in the writings of the apostles?

13. Meanwhile he dreams up the idea that the Latin translator produced what we now have under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, though Jerome himself in his preface openly testifies that each translator renders to the best of his ability what he is capable of understanding. Otherwise, Jerome himself would be grossly irreligious, in that he is not afraid to find fault sometimes with what we have in this edition.

14. In order to prove that all eloquence must be sought from Holy Scripture, he produces Jerome as his authority, although Jerome credits some of the prophets with uneducated language and Paul with ignorance of Greek, and that too in more than one passage.

15. We believe that Augustine likewise had the assistance of the Holy Spirit in expounding the books of Scripture; and yet he revises his work and wishes it to be read with a critical eye.

16. Besides which, the objection he raises against himself, following Jerome, that the saints were more eloquent in their mother tongue than in any other, is thus dissolved by our expert logician. 'If it is a question,' says

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Hebrew and Greek as a basis. Erasmus may also have thought of Jerome's preface (see below line 447n) which acknowledges the papal request to revise the New Testament.

110 another decree] It dated from the Council of Vienne, 1311–12, but is slightly misrepresented here. See Epp 182:205n, 337:733–5.

128 preface] To the Pentateuch (PL 28:179–84)

134 prophets] *Prologus in Ieremiam* (PL 28:903)

135 more than one passage] Cf Ep 844:91n.

137 revises] In his *Retractationes;* cf Ep 810:132n.

he, 'of the flatulent and windy verbiage admired by the world, I at least do not refuse to call the saints inarticulate. But if the saints meant rustic barbarism when they criticized the prophets, it is right in our day to have a higher opinion of them.' As though the word 'eloquence' changed its meaning when wrongly used, or as though we thought the apostles foolish and rustic in their statements of principle, in which the most important part of eloquence is to be found, or as though Cyprian's style must be windy verbiage because it is unlike the language of the prophets.

17. He then concludes this elegant syllogism by telling us that all the folly and falsehood of the poets must be rejected, in order to secure the truth of his conclusion. It goes like this (and I quote the precise words, so let no one suspect me of fabricating my charges): 'The sole source for purity of language, for ornament, for elegance or eloquence, lies in Holy Scripture alone.' But what has eloquence in prose or verse to do with grammar? This is where the amphora started that suddenly turned out to be a storage-jar. St Augustine on the other hand, to whom he refers, tells his friend Licentius to return to his familiar Muses. And Jerome makes himself familiar with Cicero's dialogues to get himself a more abundant style. Did any of the Ancients draw his style from any other source than the works of orators and poets? Who ever attempted to enrich his vocabulary out of Holy Scripture? Finally, has anyone by despising the poets immediately achieved eloquence of this sacred and prophetical variety?

18. And surely anyone can see that this famous argument of his contains manifest blasphemy. He says that the only elegance is to be found in Holy Scripture; does this mean that only elegance is to be found there? Yet what Augustine says, whom he quotes as an authority, is not the same as what this man meant – although he is too illiterate to express what he did mean. For Augustine argues, not that eloquence is to be found solely in Holy Scripture, but that it does not lack eloquence, while possessing wisdom whose handmaid he thinks eloquence should be, although he admits it is eloquence of a different kind. And yet he calls in question whether Scripture should be credited with any share of eloquence, though of its other virtues he has no doubt.

19. To ignore for the moment that it does not immediately follow, if you

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148 Cyprian's style] Cf Allen Ep 1000:65–116.

156 amphora] Horace *Ars poetica* 21, 22

156 St Augustine] Cf *De ordine* 1.8.24 (CC 29:100–1) and Erasmus' *Methodus*, prefacing the New Testament in the 1516 edition (*Ausgewählte Werke*, Darmstadt 1967– , III 50–1).

158 Jerome] Cf *Adversus Rufinum* 1.16 (PL 23:428–9).

167 Augustine] Cf perhaps De *doctrina christiana* 4.6.9–7.21 (CC 32:121–31).

can produce a certain number of rhetorical figures from the writings of the apostles, that perfect eloquence is to be found in them, since Jerome and Origen and Chrysostom are often offended by their inversions, their uncompleted arguments, and the other drawbacks of their style; but in apostles we do not expect Aristotelian or Platonic philosophy, any more than wealth or servants, and equally we do not expect eloquence.

20. After that, he strings together three prodigious lies when he says, pointing at me, 'What then can a man now have in mind who tries to bring back into the daylight the version of Lorenzo Valla that was condemned long ago, except to make the language of Holy Scripture look despicable and inept?' To begin with, everyone knows it to be false that Lorenzo made a version of Holy Scripture. Still more false is it that his annotations were condemned long ago. Falsest of all, his remark that anyone who publishes them is trying to make the language of Holy Scripture look despicable. On the contrary, it is made both more luminous and more attractive by the removal of portentous errors, imported into it by his own old friends.

21. Then he lets fly against me and makes a tremendous fuss because in a proverb somewhere I compared Holy Scripture in passing to those Silenus figures spoken of by Alcibiades, although the same view is held in different language by every orthodox theologian. What comparison could be more appropriate? And this man speaks as though no one but he understands the Scriptures – because he is innocent of anything in the way of culture! – and as though I were incapable of achieving any of the discoveries of which he is so proud.

22. And look at the shameless falsehoods which he aims at me, declaring that by this comparison I make a mock of Holy Scripture! When all that I say there aims at the praise and glory of Christ and of his holy word, as must be obvious to all who read what I write. A fine example of that heavenly eloquence that he and he alone has acquired – without opening the poets, from his studies in Holy Writ! – the virtue of which is to make shameless attacks with a lot of trumped-up charges against another man's reputation.

23. It is the same folly that makes him say I deprive Holy Writ of its eloquence, when in so many passages I speak highly of it. I am concerned with nothing but the translation; and if I have any fault to find with the apostles, I state openly that it lies in their language, and even so, I do not criticize or correct it.

24. Our self-appointed inquisitor ordains that all the poets shall be thrown away, although, as I say, Augustine tells his friends to go back to

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193 proverb] *Adagia* III iii 1; cf Ep 337:546–7.

213 as I say] Cf lines 156–8.

them and so often quotes them with respect; nor is he alone in this. And why mention the poets, as though it was with their aid that I corrected the New Testament rather than on the authority of ancient and orthodox Fathers who are read with approval by the whole church?

25. After this he invokes all the authority of a certain Thomas (I cannot think it is Aquinas), who wrote a commentary on Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, to prove his assertion that all the poets should be thrown away, because Boethius speaks of the torn garments of the Muses. He does not notice that, ragged as they are, they tell him what he is to write, and that he relaxes in lyric verse all through his book; nor does he drive away all the Muses, but only those of the theatre, and not even them completely, but only while he is in such great grief, which needs a more powerful remedy. I will forgive anyone who looks down on the Muses as Boethius looked down on them; but this man rejects poetry as gold and jewels are rejected by donkeys.

26. Furthermore, while Boethius called the elegiac Muses 'all in rags' because they bear all the outward marks of sorrow, our friend adapts the epithet to poetry as a whole, and says they are called ragged in two ways, actively because they tear men's minds to rags and passively because they rest on no unbroken basis of reason. Both remarks are equally absurd.

27. He then goes further and, since elegance of style depends not on reason but on authority, he challenges me to put forward two examples, one from the poets and one from Holy Scripture, and stand or fall by the result. I therefore put forward that phrase from the Apocalypse 'He that is and was and is to come' – words which are attributed to St John, so let us have no quibbling about the translation; and the other from the poets 'Well begun is half done.'

28. Not but what he has forgotten all this time that Augustine speaks of more eminent authors, meaning classics like Plautus, Sallust, Cicero, and others like them, and says that elegance of style depends upon their

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218 Thomas] The attribution to Aquinas had justly been rejected by Josse Bade; cf P. Courcelle *La Consolation de philosophie dans la tradition littéraire* (Paris 1967) 322–3. The commentary is found in many old editions of Boethius; and in vol 32 of the Vivès edition of St Thomas (Paris 1871–). There is no evidence that Thomas Wallensis is the author, as Allen thought.

221 Boethius] *De consolatione philosophiae* 1.1.3

236 'He ... to come'] Rev 4:8, a celebrated phrase in which the first and third members are expressed with participles (which is good grammar) and the middle one with an imperfect indicative (which is barbarous).

238 'Well ... done'] Horace *Epistles* 1.2.40; succinct elegance has rendered the expression proverbial – see *Adagia* I ii 39.

240 Augustine] See above line 109n.

authority and not on the Holy Spirit. And yet the language of the apostles does not conform to their authority.

29. Not to mention, at the same time, that when Augustine lays it down, following Quintilian, that good writing has a threefold purpose, to instruct, to entertain, and to move the reader, this man refers it to the authority of St Thomas. And who can deny that we owe this to the Holy Spirit, when he without the Holy Spirit gives so much entertainment – though he does not instruct us, or move us except to laughter?

30. He reasons moreover, in his idiot fashion, as follows: 'Hitherto the church has used this version: if the version is done away, the church did not possess the Holy Spirit.' I will now reason in my turn, thus: 'Ambrose did not possess this version: he therefore did not possess the Holy Spirit.'

31. On the contrary, the gift of the Spirit is given more lavishly, the more the church acquires of other good things. In the old days she had no literature and no eloquence, and she lacked wealth and power; now she has both, but it does not follow that Christ has deserted his spouse.

32. That countrified and simple style in which the New Testament was left to us by the apostles suited those early days; nowadays perhaps it is fitting that we should have it in neater dress, provided it be simple still.

33. And all the time, all through this argument, the solecisms which we find in our Latin New Testament, and even the errors which his old friends have introduced in no small number, are ascribed by him to the authority of the Holy Spirit – with barefaced impudence, for it would be improper to do such a thing even with the apostles.

34. Finally, he settles the question with a syllogism more than worthy of Chrysippus. 'Eloquence stems from authority; it is therefore not a science. From the authority of the lesser judges or the greater? Not from the lesser; from the greater therefore. But no man is greater than the Holy Spirit. It is unlawful therefore to make any innovations in the New Testament.' Who can read such stuff and not roar with laughter?

35. Besides this, he makes a malicious attack on a statement in a certain letter of mine to Dorp that the leaders of the church have been more concerned with a knowledge of the ancient tongues than with sophistic or Aristotelian philosophy, since in particular they took steps to encourage the tongues as being absolutely necessary, but did nothing of the sort for

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245 Augustine] *De doctrina christiana* 4.12.27 (CC 32:135), but Augustine's quotation is closer to Cicero *Orator* 21.69 than to Quintilian 3.5.2.

268 Chrysippus] Head of the Stoic school of philosophy in the third century BC, whose interest in logic was well-known

274 letter ... to Dorp] Ep 337:733–7, by then repeatedly reprinted

277 but] reading *autem* for *aut*

sophistic philosophy; in fact, it is called in question in the *Decreta*, some great authorities disapproving of it. At this point, he accused me of a triple falsehood. 'Not at all,' he says 'every wise man teaches that without philosophy it is impossible to understand the Scriptures.' But out of this large party, he does not produce a single name. If he did produce one, it would not touch me, for I am speaking of the warnings conveyed in the *Decreta*.

36. Secondly, he admits that the study of philosophy has aroused doubts, but not, he says, disapproval. That is exactly what I say. A subject, therefore, which has been encouraged by decree and never doubted is much more reliable.

37. He also denies that the study of philosophy has ever been disapproved of by eminent authorities. He will not deny it if he reads Origen, Jerome, Ambrose.

38. But then he argues against me on this point as though I condemned the study of philosophy, when all I did was compare it with practice in the tongues. At least it cannot be denied that the gift of tongues was given to the apostles as something essential for the preaching of the Gospel; that they were given a knowledge of the philosophy of Plato or Aristotle is not on record – although a reasonable study of philosophy has my emphatic approval.

39. It is absurd that he should expect the interpreter, the man who makes a translation, to seek his style from the Holy Spirit without any reading of classical authors, and should deny that anyone can compass an explanation, which is really a more excellent gift of prophecy, except with the help of Aristotelian philosophy.

40. This first conclusion, as he calls it, he rounds off by saying that all poets were thieves and robbers, who came later. And yet most of the poets were before Christ; nor does he distinguish what a poet is, so that he seems to thrust Damasus, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Prudentius down into this class.

41. Then, as though forgetting what he has just said, he admits that in the sacred books there is no elegance of style; but thus it seemed good to God, he says, to save the human race by foolishness. Nor did any of the saints dare, he says, to alter the style of the translators, although that is what Jerome did, when the Septuagint had already been accepted in the public

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307 this class] Prudentius is the greatest poet of Christian antiquity; Gregory did write many poems, but is better known as a theologian. Pope Damasus I (d 384) was primarily concerned with placing the text of Scripture, the creed, and the institution of the papacy on solid foundations.

usage of the church for nearly five hundred years. Besides which he was not afraid to alter a Hebraism too harsh for modern ears, which we can still see in Augustine's book on the idioms of the Old Covenant.

42. 'The man who denies,' he says, 'that this version is Jerome's flies in the face of the whole world, of every rank in the ministry, and of the whole established order. The Roman church herself confesses that her version is Jerome's, and sets his prefaces at its head.' Those are his words. Let him substantiate what he asserts so boldly. The church of Rome has never pronounced on this point, and it is the consensus of scholars that this version is not Jerome's.

43. What then is the point of the abuse he levels at me? 'No doubt they are all liars, and he alone is speaking the truth.' As though I alone had said what thousands of scholars freely admit.

44. But Jerome's prefaces are added. Is that surprising, they being so informative? Though some of them are not Jerome's.

45. Then he expects me to make it clear that Jerome disapproves of some things which are found in my edition. Let him read Jerome for himself and convict me of falsehood if he can.

46. He says that the church cannot err. Is the church in error instantly if there is a corruption in your copy of the text? And yet some things can happen to the church of which she has no previous experience. And I maintain, not that in this translation there is anything that can undermine the orthodox faith, but that there are defects which it is worth while to point out. Read my own version, and if you do not find hundreds of passages which you, good scholar as you are, have hitherto misunderstood, have the law on me to your heart's content.

47. 'You are a stumbling-block to the world,' he says, 'with your innovations in things that all accept.' Not at all: all men of the highest station and character are grateful to me, and the dogs who barked to begin with bark no more when they have read my work. A few conceited people take offence, who would not have it thought that there is anything they did not know.

48. 'Granting,' says he, 'that there are errors in the text, it was not right to publish them for ordinary people.' On the contrary, there is every reason to publish things that all men ought to know.

49. 'A private person,' he says, 'without authorization cannot make a new translation or correct an old one.' In the first place, I think that I, like others, have the right, if I have made any progress in theology, to make it

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314 five hundred years] The Septuagint translation originated in Alexandria during the third century BC.

316 Augustine's book] *De locutionibus* (PL 34:485–546)

publicly known, having been co-opted into a faculty of theology. Secondly, I am not making a new version; I translate the Greek; and so far as I am concerned, the old version is still there for all men's use, as it always was. Last but not least, let us assume that I have no authority: does this mean that, while the ignorant are free to corrupt the sacred text, I may not correct it unless a synod has been summoned first? Suppose I were a bishop or a cardinal, what has that to do with it? The business in hand calls not for a mitre or a red hat, but for skill in the tongues.

50. There is another absurdity, where he says that this is the version which refuted Jerome Hus and Wycliffe; whereas the former was burnt and not confuted, and the latter's books were not condemned until after his death. And even if what he says were quite true, does it follow that it is unlawful to remove any error that may have crept into the Scriptures?

51. 'If there is any error in them,' he says, 'it should have been corrected in accordance with the ancient testimony of the Fathers.' And yet what he demands is exactly what I have done; only this has escaped his notice, because he has not glanced at my book.

52. 'Leprosy,' he says, 'must be shown to the priest, whose business it is to pass judgment.' Quite right; and that is why I submitted my work to Leo the Tenth, who had encouraged me to undertake it. And he, by the agency of two cardinals, approved my efforts. When he thinks fit, he will entrust to some person of his choice the task of having my books corrected by the learned. This is a province which I do not take upon myself, although I have paved the way to it.

53. As for the point he makes about the seventy separate cells, he does not perceive that the force of this falls on Jerome, who makes fun of them as the constructions of some anonymous forger. If their version is attributed to the Holy Spirit, Jerome is impious, who calls it somewhere a forgery; and yet

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351 faculty of theology] At Louvain: see Ep 637:12n.

360 Jerome Hus] A slight confusion: Jerome of Prague (after 1365–30 May 1416) and Jan Hus (1370/1–6 July 1415) were both burned during the Council of Constance.

361 after his death] While five bulls issued by Gregory XI in 1377 suspected John Wycliffe (c 1330–84) of heresy and listed a number of specific statements due to be investigated, a longer list of errors was drawn up by the Council of Constance in 1415, which declared him a heretic and ordered his remains to be dug up and his books to be burned.

368 'Leprosy ... judgment'] Cf Lev 13:49.

371 cardinals] See Ep 835 introduction.

375 separate cells] Occupied by the translators of the Septuagint; see Jerome *Praefatio in Pentateuchum*, also quoted in *Adversus Rufinum* 2.25; cf Ep 326:90–2.

this verdict of Jerome's is accepted by the church in respect of several books of the Old Covenant.

54. The same wisdom is evident in his remark that the Greeks falsified their texts when they split off from the Roman church. And what, pray, was the reason why they should corrupt them all? Moreover, their separation from the Roman church being quite recent, how comes it that their modern texts and their very ancient ones are in agreement? How comes it that Origen and Basil and Chysostom – and Latin Fathers too, Ambrose, Jerome, Hilary, Cyprian – are in accord with their falsified texts and disagree with ours? Did the Greeks falsify at one stroke the texts used by all these authors?

55. Moreover, where I had objected, following the papal decrees, that the true text of the New Testament ought to be checked against the Greek copies, he admits that in ancient times this was appropriate, but says that nothing could be less so now. And the reason he gives is their separation. As though the revolt of the Greeks had made any difference to their text of the Gospels!

56. But if the fact that the Greeks have split off from the Roman church is a valid reason for mistrusting the Greek text of the Bible, it was equally illicit in Jerome's day to correct the Old Testament out of the Hebrew texts, for the Jewish people had already rebelled, not from the Roman church but from Christ himself, which I consider somewhat more damnable.

57. Last but not least, if we are to put our trust exclusively in the books of Greeks who are not schismatics, it is precisely their texts that I follow for preference; but they do not differ from the schismatics' copies.

58. But his master-stroke of impudence is that, whereas I had written that it is more difficult for a Greek text to be corrupted than for one of ours, he makes out that I said it was impossible for Greek codices to be damaged in any way; and though the reason I adduced was the difficulty of Greek script, which is made up not merely of letters but of ligatures and accents, this liar says the reason I gave was that the Greek language allows no scope for falsehood. What monstrous effrontery – especially as my letter still exists and has been printed more than once!

59. And on this point he maintains that I contradict Augustine, who wrote that Luke was the only gospel accepted by Greek heretics. What is it to us, if the Greeks had their heretics? Is it a reason for corruption in Latin texts, that heretics have arisen among the Latins? I myself in this work follow none

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389 papal decrees] See lines 108–112.
403 I had written] In Ep 337:800–5
411 Augustine] Cf *De haeresibus* 30 (CC 46:304).

but orthodox authorities; and even so, there are places where it would be right to give heretics too a hearing. What new critical spirit have we here?

60. He attacks me for stating that the Greeks do not differ from the Roman church in those doctrines which are set forth in the books of the New Testament, and that the only points in dispute are in ancient times the word *homusius* and nowadays certain questions of liturgy and the jurisdiction and poverty of the Roman pontiff. 'Let the man read Augustine's *De haeresibus*,' says he, 'and he will learn what he has been ignorant of hitherto.' What sort of argument, if you please, is this? Everybody knows that various heresies arose among the Greeks even before they recognized the Roman church, and yet in those days they were reputed orthodox. I am talking about schism, and the questions on which those Greeks differ from us who have separated themselves from the Roman See.

61. If, however, he contends that the Greeks did manipulate their texts, at least the passages they corrupted were those which appeared to undermine their schismatic opinions. Then let him produce one single passage which can be suspect on those grounds. In actual fact, if anything can arouse suspicion in the Greek texts, it will be above all the passages which were thought to tell in favour of the Arians or the school of Origen; for the whole of Greece seems to have been united in such hatred or jealousy of them in particular that, although their authors have taken from Origen as their source almost everything they tell us that is worth having, they seem to have had nothing so much at heart, none the less, as the complete destruction of everything he wrote – which would have been enough, even in isolation, to give us an understanding of Holy Scripture. I overlook for the moment the way in which he tells me to read Augustine on heresies as though he were the only man who had ever read it, or as though I could not read it unless instructed to by him, or as though I do not in fact cite evidence from that work in several places.

62. We have surveyed the keen thinker and the brilliant writer, and I cannot refrain from giving you at the same time an example of the wit. This is the kind of elegant sally in which this facetious fellow, the Graces' favourite son, indulges at my expense. 'Jerome remarks,' says he, 'that there are as many different texts as there are copies. Some men follow one copy and some another; which is our poor translator to take as his authority? At any rate, my dear Jerome, saint as you are, it was to no purpose that Pope Damasus drove

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417 stating] In Ep 337:790–5

435 from Origen] Cf Ep 844:272–4.

447 Jerome] In the preface, addressed to Pope Damasus I, of his edition of the Gospels (PL 29:558)

you to work so hard, when there was in existence a Greek copy faultless at all points, which our translator has now unearthed. O my dear Jerome, what a blinking night-owl you were, if you could not find such a copy as our friend, a mere beginner, has now found!' Such are his words, and as I recall them I think of Hercules at Lindus, and how he enjoyed the flood of abuse as he sat at dinner. In the old days there were as many different texts as there were copies, and now it is not so. So what did Jerome follow in correcting the text? And another point: did I really depend on a single copy?

63. Again, repeating his initial assumption that by my new translation I wish to do away with the old, he recommends to me the rule of Augustine, who 'in the canonical writings follows the authority of the great majority of churches, which should include of course those which were important enough to have apostles as their bishops and to have epistles addressed to them. A man will therefore observe this limitation in the canonical books: he will prefer those which are accepted by all catholic churches to those which certain of them do not accept, and among those which are not accepted by all churches he will prefer those received by more numerous and important churches to those held by churches which are fewer and less authoritative. If however he finds that some are held by the majority of churches and others by the more important ones, though such a thing is not easy to find,' and so forth. From all this he infers that my translation can carry no weight at all. But how am I affected by what is said in this passage about the rejection or acceptance of books, and not about the correction of the text? Otherwise, why did Augustine himself accept Jerome's version, which was entirely new? And besides, what scope will be left for this rule of Augustine's, if the only thing all the churches are allowed to accept is what has already been accepted by the church of Rome? Not that I am against Augustine, but because it is clear that he did not recognize the authority of the Roman See which we now accord it; all the more so as, when writing to Innocent, he addresses him as brother and gives no hint of his supreme eminence, but treats him as a colleague.

64. After this he proceeds as though I thought there were some falsehood or folly in those Scriptures in which I admit that there is some

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455 Lindus] *Adagia* II v 19. Hercules killed and ate two oxen belonging to a peasant at Lindus in the island of Rhodes, and maintained that the owner's curses made his meat taste all the sweeter.

460 Augustine] *De doctrina christiana* 2.8.12 (CC 32:39)

474 Jerome's version] Cf above line 23n.

480 eminence] There is little substance to Erasmus' claim, except that Augustine and other bishops quite properly addressed Pope Innocent I as brother; see Augustine Epp 175–7.

obscurity. On the contrary, if there is anything false or foolish in the copies, it is attributable not to the apostles but to the old cronies of this muck-raking critic. And in any case I make no changes that affect the solid basis of the faith.

65. He instructs me therefore that I ought to have sent my book to the supreme pontiff for him to decide whether it should be suppressed or published. On that argument every book ought to be sent to the supreme pontiff, for every book might contain matter of offence for someone. But Thomas never did such a thing, nor did Scotus, nor for that matter did Augustine or Jerome. They published first, and the approval followed, and was not asked for. And furthermore, as I do not uproot the old version, but by publishing a revision of it make it easier for us not only to possess it in a purer form but to understand it better, how could I suspect that there would be malignant critics like this man, ready to take offence at a work that would benefit everyone? If anyone had cause to fear a stumbling-block, it was those that are weak; yet on their side no cause of stumbling has arisen. All this trouble has been stirred up solely by two or three people of the class commonly accounted perfect, who when my book was not yet published poisoned the minds of simple folk everywhere and condemned what as yet they knew nothing of, rousing prejudice against my work before it was known what good it could do. It is their fault, not mine, if any man has been offended.

66. Again, that I should have dared to dedicate it to Leo the Tenth, he calls temerity. 'The poets,' he says, 'show brazen temerity in dedicating their worst obscenities to those who are endowed with the highest positions in the church.' And why did our muck-raker suddenly drag the poets in at this point? Or who pray are those poets who dedicate their filth to bishops? Far from that, I dedicated my work to the pope in response to a letter to me from himself; nor did he think it too much to read a large part of it with his own eyes. Men of the greatest authority can testify that having read it he gave it the highest praise in the hearing of the cardinals and scholars who were with him. And, as I said before, he sent me an answer by the agency of two cardinals.

67. In any case, what does he mean by 'authorize'? Put through such tests that there is no error left? If that is the law, nothing we have is authorized outside the canonical Scriptures. Nor is that what I asked of Leo.

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501 perfect] Apparently the academic theologians; cf below lines 538–42.

511 in response] This is probably a confusion; see Ep 835 introduction; cf above lines 370–1.

I merely draw men's attention, leaving the decision to scholars, if they have found something more correct.

68. After these declamatory flights he spreads himself in a more agreeable field and portrays for us the gifts of a translator out of Augustine and Thomas, but all the time confusing at every point the gift of the tongues or of interpretation and the gift of prophecy, which according to Paul are different gifts. He declares that no one can translate Scripture unless he is provided with the gift of the Holy Ghost. And yet I have shown that St Jerome's view was different, though he is the translator of both Testaments.

69. Besides this, while there is, I suppose, no one today arrogant enough to claim that he has the gift of prophecy or of the tongues, it is rash to pass judgment on the spirit of other men. I have striven to convey the very truth, following in the footsteps of the orthodox Fathers, nor have I set any goal before me save the reader's profit and Christ's glory. As I toiled, from time to time I sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit; at least there was no lack of good intentions. Further, what angel was it gave you the idea that the Spirit's aid was denied me as I sought to do good, while you fancy he was one of your privy council as you penned these scurrilous attacks – attacks, moreover, on a work you had never even seen? Nor is the identity of your paraclete concealed from me. He who poured calumnies on a work that did not yet exist – he was your inspiration in criticizing a work you had not read, if we can call it criticism to spew what filth you please over something you've never seen.

70. He declares it unlawful for any man to teach without public authorization. Does it not satisfy him that I have the same authorization that Thomas had? (Not that I would compare myself with him.) Does it not satisfy him if I do it at the urgent request of the best of prelates and on encouragement from the pope himself? Though Thomas for that matter is not concerned with publishing texts, but with public sermons or lectures.

71. He maintains that Jerome did not dare undertake a version of Holy

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525 Paul] Cf 1 Cor 12:10.

535 you] Here and in line 629 Erasmus lapses inadvertently into the second person, as though Lee were addressed directly; corrected in the *Epistolae ad diversos* of 1521.

538 your paraclete] Here and in lines 571, 633 we find probably the first hints at Erasmus' conviction that his growing difficulties in Louvain were caused in the first place by Jan Briart of Ath (cf Ep 670 introduction), theologian and chief administrative officer of the University of Louvain; cf Epp 948:27n, 998 introduction, Allen Ep 1029:2–5.

549 Jerome] The dedicatory preface to Damasus (cf line 447n) does not mention his translations of books of the Old Testament, but cf Epp 35–6, 56 (CSEL 54:265–85,

Scripture, except on orders from Damasus. What effrontery the man has! On whose authority then did he translate the Pentateuch? At the request of a certain Desiderius, was it not? Was it Damasus put him up to translate the books of Esdras? Read his preface, and let this featherpate blush for his mistakes. And then Tobit: surely he was put up to that by Chromatius and Heliodorus? But why need I refute his falsehoods one by one, seeing that the New Testament was the only thing Jerome revised at the request of Pope Damasus?

72. It is known therefore that the New Testament was revised at the request of Pope Damasus; but it is not known that he approved Jerome's revision. For you cannot approve something of which you have no knowledge – especially as this fellow thinks everything should be rejected that has not achieved endorsal (to adapt his own flowers of speech) in published instruments.

73. Though Damasus does not lay this task upon him by virtue of being supreme pontiff of the world. Whether he was such a thing I leave an open question; the name at least in those days had not yet been heard, so far as one can gather from the writings of all the early Fathers. He lays the task as bishop of Rome upon Jerome as being hitherto a Roman; for it was in Rome that he was both baptized and ordained to the priesthood.

74. Meanwhile there is another surprising fact: this scandalmonger, or the spirit that suborns him, has never so much as mentioned Lefèvre d'Etaples, who showed earlier and greater audacity than I ever have, and that too without authorization either from the pope, whom I had informed by letter of what I was setting out to do before I set out, or from the authority conferred on all who are accepted as professors of divinity. From this it is clear that he does not so much dislike the result as wish to attack the man who produced it.

75. So, having accomplished this to his heart's content, he goes on to make trouble about a remark in my letter to Dorp that 'Jerome sometimes cannot refrain from an outburst of indignation against Vigilantius, from levelling insults against Jovinian and bitter invective against Rufinus.' This he interprets as a savage and wanton attack on Jerome, as though I meant that he was wrong in so doing, or as though Jerome while still alive was

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497–8). The following references to three prefaces inserted in Jerome's Bible also do not refer to an order from Damasus; cf PL 28:177–9, 1471; 29:23–6.

571 Lefèvre d'Etaples] Cf Ep 337, which had, it seems, been closely scrutinized by Lee, especially lines 879–905.

573 by letter] Cf Ep 835 introduction.

579 a remark] Ep 337:54–7

exempt from all human failings, and indeed as though every man of good will did not sometimes wish that Jerome had a little more of this mildness in him.

76. Then again, rejecting a remark of mine that in what I write I never reflect on any man's reputation, he objects that in a number of passages I dissent from Thomas, from the Master of the Sentences, from Lyra, from Hugo of Saint-Cher, as though no one could dissent without insulting or attacking the reputation of his opponent. Could anything be more idiotic? And yet, if I do dissent, it is with a prior expression of respect for those to whom such respect is due, among whom I do not reckon Lyra or Saint-Cher. And if some do accord them less weight than they used to, there was no reason why to preserve their authority we must always follow a false view.

77. He says they would not tolerate it, if they were still alive. Very well: let him who like a second Elisha has succeeded to their spirit play their part for them if he can.

78. Then he thinks it an unanswerable argument against me that in my notes on Jerome I poke fun in passing at a certain Franciscan, while I do this without naming any names, and there is such a large crowd of Franciscans for whom such fun would be appropriate. If one were to tell a story of a man's ignorance without mentioning his name, must one be thought to insult all one's fellow-creatures?

79. What follows, to be quite honest, I simply do not understand, but I will copy his own words with the bloom still on them: 'I might add,' says he, 'that he is wrong in thus attacking this Franciscan. It is men greedy for position or reputation, hungry for coin, empty-headed, full of words and wind, who see to it that our text of Jerome should be thus mutilated and corrupt. If some copies are corrupt through scribal error, let them be corrected against ancient texts (for I reckon some can still be found that were written in Jerome's own day), and let us not have new ones made which destroy the elegance of Jerome and his eloquence and meaning.' Those are his words.

80. My first question is: by these elegant words 'hungry for coin, empty-headed, full of words and wind' and so forth, does he mean to describe the Franciscans?

81. Secondly, is he saying that I mutilated Jerome, when I have added a

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586 remark of mine] Ep 337:63–6

588 dissent from] Thomas Aquinas; Peter Lombard (cf Ep 456:273n); Nicholas of Lyra (cf Ep 372:13n); Hugo of Saint-Cher (cf Ep 459:81n) – principal representatives of scholastic theology in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries

596 second Elisha] Cf 2 Kings 2:9.

599 Franciscan] Henry Standish; cf Epp 337:711–17, 608:15n.

great deal to earlier editions and cut away nothing except wrong headings in a number of places?

82. And then, am I inventing a new Jerome, and not rather restoring the ancient one? Are some people so crass that they think what they are reading now is Erasmus and not Jerome?

83. Again, do they suppose that I have corrected Jerome from any source other than very ancient copies, which might well be thought to have been written in the age of Jerome himself, did any such thing exist? And even so, I have not been satisfied with single copies. In this department at least very good scholars have done more work than might be thought possible.

84. What are these things that overthrow Jerome's elegance and eloquence and meaning? Unless you find nothing elegant except what smacks of your own style.

85. After this, like a spider on the warpath, he brings up some of his venom on passages selected from the *Moria* as well, although I bet my life he has never read it. But inspired by that guardian angel of his he says I have never adequately defended that passage where, through the mouth of Folly, I described the supreme reward of immortality as a kind of foolishness – a statement which I instantly modify in so many words in the same passage in order to give no offence to anyone. He wishes me to subject what I say to certain rules. What rules? Not those followed by Augustine or by Jerome or by Cyprian or by Thomas or by Peter Lombard, men whose wording is scarcely defended by professional theologians. Shall we derive our rule from the scholastic philosophers of our own day? They do not agree among themselves. I agree that we should be circumspect in our references to sacred things; that we should be hypochondriac and hypercritical I do not see.

86. If we are allowed to use no words except those of Holy Scripture, how did Thomas dare to use so many novelties in both words and things – some taken from Aristotle and some of his own invention – in not merely expressing an opinion but laying down the law about holy things? Where do we read in Holy Writ that the church of Christ exists essentially in the gathering of all the faithful, by representation in the cardinals and virtually in the Roman pontiff? (To choose this one instance out of many thousands.) If we may use no comparative image that is not in Holy Writ, what shall we make of all the orthodox Fathers who adduce countless new images to support their teaching? No one raises loud protests against the work of a certain Dominican, crassly stupid though it is, which gives a Christian

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632 *Moria*] Cf *Moriae encomium*, ASD IV-3 190; Erasmus suggests that Lee is merely repeating Ep 337:554–6.

adaptation – distortion, rather – of all the myths in Ovid. Yet they rant on against me for distorting the Sileni to fit Christ and his apostles, though I show more reverence than they do in their own treatment of Holy Writ.

87. But what is my offence if I do attribute folly to God or to Christ, as Paul did before me, and after Paul Augustine did in more passages than one? May I not even use Paul's own words? I only wish that the folly which I attribute to Christ and the apostles could be ascribed in real earnest to all our bishops!

88. But pray mark this! The man has found something with which he can simply cut my throat. In order to show how Christ had brought himself down to the level of our weakness, I had said that there was in Christ something infirm, something subject to our affections; and the blockhead imagines that I attribute faulty passions of the mind to Christ. Whereupon, as though he had won the day, he enjoys his triumph, proclaiming that from time to time I posit a blemish or wrinkle in Christ; and all he says reeks of blemishes and wrinkles.

89. Then, having expounded out of Thomas that the motions of the mind are one thing in Christ and quite another in the apostles, he sums up thus: 'Had Erasmus known the distinction between the passions of Christ and the apostles, he would not have arrived at this opinion.' As though I have not explained this at length, some twenty years ago, in my disputation with Colet! Or as though I could not have discovered this for myself, even had Thomas never given that lecture!

90. He goes on to get his teeth into my remark that the ecstasy of godly men, which Plato calls a holy madness, is a kind of foretaste of future blessedness, by which we shall be absorbed into God and shall live in future

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655 Ovid] On the 'moralization' of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the Middle Ages, still amply reflected in the commentaries of early printed editions, see F. Munari *Ovid im Mittelalter* (Zürich 1960); J. Engels *Etudes sur l'Ovide moralisé* (Groningen 1943). The reference is probably to the *Ovidius moralizatus* of Pierre Bersuire, published in Paris (J. Bade) in 1509. This is often ascribed to Thomas Wallensis, an English Dominican.

656 Sileni] Cf Ep 337:545–7; *Adagia* III iii 1.

658 folly] Cf *Moriae encomium*, ASD IV-3 188; Ep 337:499–501.

659 Paul] 1 Cor 1:18–28; cf ASD IV-3 186.

659 Augustine] Cf eg *Enarratio in Psalmum* 40.1 (CC 38:449).

665 I had said] In *De tedio Iesu* against Colet (LB V 1270B, 1288A–B); cf Ep 108 introduction.

669 blemish] Cf Eph 5:27.

678 my remark] Ep 337:489–91

679 Plato] *Phaedrus* 256b

more in him than in ourselves. Whereupon he goes for me with Turlupins and Beghards, whatever they may be, who taught, it seems, that the soul is absorbed into the divinity as a drop of water put into a wine-cask is absorbed into the wine, and who also hold that all things will be as they were before the creation of the world. What have the ravings of his Turlupins and Beghards to do with me? I said that the soul was absorbed by God because it is wholly rapt into him by love, and the soul exists more truly where it loves than where it gives life. For it is rapt away in such a fashion that it does not disappear but is made perfect.

91. Leaving the *Moria,* he passes to the *Enchiridion,* where, in the course of urging that we should follow the mind and not the body, because it is in the mind that we bear the image of God, I wrote among other things: 'As concerns the soul, we are so far capable of divinity that we are permitted to rise even beyond the minds of the angels and to become one with God.' And again something to this effect (I have not the book handy) 'Had you no mind, you would be a beast; had you no body, you would be a god'; he seems to wish to attack as though I had given it as my opinion that the human soul is a particle of the divine nature. What need is there to refute these barefaced falsehoods?

92. Returning to the *Moria,* he says it does not follow to say 'There is something foolish in God; therefore God is foolish.' I beg you, dear reader, not to take offence at the language, for the meaning is pious enough, and it is on the meaning that he challenges me. But it follows well to say 'There is such a thing as the foolishness of God; therefore God can be called in some way foolish. There is such a thing as the blackness of a crow; therefore a crow is black.' For that 'foolish' there is put for foolishness I have further shown out of the reading of Augustine.

93. But meanwhile he ignores the exaggeration of Paul, who speaks of the foolishness of God in contrast to his eternal and inexpressible wisdom, after showing us that of which we might somehow or other be capable. As Christ took upon himself our infirmity, so he also assumed to some extent our foolishness.

94. Finally, the falsehoods he utters about the ecstasy of the three disciples do not seem to me to be worthy of refutation. He supposes this to mean an ecstasy in which a man is wholly rapt out of his bodily senses. Men lose their reason from both fear and joy, so that they do not know what they

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681 Turlupins and Beghards] Heterodox sects of the fourteenth century; cf G. Leff *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester 1967) I 325 and passim.

690 *Enchiridion*] LB V 11F–12E; cf Ep 858 introduction.

708 Paul] See lines 658–662.

713 ecstasy] Matt 17; cf Ep 337:487–92; *Moriae encomium,* ASD IV-3 192.

are saying, or those who are beside themselves from some other reason. It was said of Peter that he knew not what he said. This was good enough for me in a humorous piece, for I was not treating a theological theme, but writing my *Moria*.

95. He says that doctors of divinity were instituted to explain things in Jerome and Augustine and not in Erasmus. As though they deserved more lenient treatment because they were greater men than we are! It is the weak who deserve leniency. We are more ready to forgive a boy than a man, and we make more allowances for Augustine and Jerome in the things they published when they were young. A theologian's job would indeed be a pretty one, if the sole object of his labours were to find some pretext on which to defend anything the Ancients may have said. If what they said was right, why may not I speak after the same fashion? Why find fault in me with what is approved in them? If it was not right, why defend them and find fault with me on the same point? And what a policy – to defend whatever the Ancients have said, or at least to turn a blind eye to much of it, and to bring trumped-up charges against everything in the books of the moderns!

You see, my dear Maarten, what a lot of nonsense there is in that small book. Though even so I have noted a few points out of many, and already repent the waste of time. And yet he is so self-confident that he dares to make you the judge whether he has said anything silly, though there are rather more silly things in his book than there are words. Such are the men who set up to teach Erasmus! And yet this is that famous book which he laboriously completed on the basis of those ten conclusions which had passed, he says, through the hands of many men, and which he proposed to dedicate to some outstanding figure; and he tells us to share such valuable material with faithful and right-thinking friends. Then he summons anyone who is willing to take him on into the ring, and demands an antagonist – though we ought to respect the eminent researches of so great a scholar, for they cannot be interrupted without great loss to the world. It would be truer to say that the poor man has a foul itch and wants someone to scratch himself against; and any man of sense will not go near him. I, to be sure, do not yet dislike the man enough to wish to expose him to the jeers of the learned world, though that is what he wants. Pray tell him, my dear Lips, to use his spare time more fruitfully in future. If he is sound at heart, he will accept your warning and amend; if his mind is too far gone, leave him to his distemper. I hope you will devote yourself to reading sacred authors, in preference to wasting your best years on this sort of rubbish.

Farewell. 1518, 7 May

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718 Peter] Luke 9:33

844 / To Johann Maier von Eck Basel, 15 May 1518

Dated soon after Erasmus' arrival at Basel (cf Ep 843 introduction), this letter answers some critical observations regarding his work made in Ep 769 by one of Germany's leading theologians.

Epp 843–4 were both published in the *Auctarium*. Superficial parallels between the two letters unfortunately left some German readers with the incorrect impression that the unnamed critic rebuked in Ep 843 was also Eck; cf *Scheurl's Briefbuch* Ep 177. While Erasmus' answer to Lee (Ep 843) shows signs of impatience, Eck deserved a careful reply in keeping with his academic reputation and the polite and cogent form in which he had voiced his criticisms.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE DISTINGUISHED THEOLOGIAN JOHANN ECK, GREETING

I accept with gratitude, my dear Eck, the kindness you have done me, which is worthy of such a well read and most scholarly person as yourself. You freely offer me what I was bound to seek with all the energy at my command, and I appreciate it all the more because it comes unasked, to prove that the proverb Goods given away will soon decay is not always in place. In the encomiums, however, which you pile upon me with more zeal than reason, I can accept and welcome nothing except the sincerity of your feelings towards me. It is for you and your like to strive for the palm of greatness; I am a small man and my themes are small. As for the carping critics (if there can be any who bear ill will to one so insignificant as myself), what surprises me in them above all is that none are more unpleasant in their protests against my work (which, if not very profitable, at least does no harm) than those who never on any account open what I write, or those who stood to gain most from it, if they would not rather rail at a man than learn from him. But you, in your scholarly way, spend almost too much time in preparing the ground before giving me your advice, although you credit me with so much good nature – if you really mean what you say. Personally, I am never reluctant to receive advice from any quarter, so far am I from demanding to be advised with deep respect by a man of your distinction. All the same, there is rather more respect – or should I say, civility? – in your preamble and your transitional passages than in the advice itself; for you put your matter

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7 proverb] Cf *Adagia* I ix 53.

11 critics] Erasmus uses the name of Zoilus, an ancient scholar impossible to please; see *Adagia* II v 8.

forward as though you were reporting mistaken charges made by others and follow up your points as though you were defending your own opinion.

To begin with, in the passage you adduce from my notes on the second chapter of Matthew, you can see that this is a disjunctive sentence consisting of two alternatives, although one of its two halves is rejected; your friends pick on one half only, and that the less acceptable half. But it is forbidden, you will say, to have any doubts at all on this point. How do you know that I have any? I am quoting other men's opinions. It does not immediately follow that because a thing is not certain, I regard it as uncertain. And then I quote a passage, the fifth chapter of Micah, where St Jerome in his commentary reviews the same opinions as I do – putting them, you say, in someone else's mouth; I agree, but not a heretic's – and his review ends in not rejecting either side. Nor, in my view, would the authority of the whole of Scripture be instantly imperilled, as you suggest, if an evangelist by a slip of memory did put one name for another, Isaiah for instance instead of Jeremiah, for this is not a point on which anything turns. We do not instantly form a low opinion of the whole of Peter's life because Augustine and Ambrose affirm that he suffered a few lapses even after he had received the Spirit from heaven, nor does a book forthwith lose all credence if it contains some blemish. Augustine and Jerome are great authorities and are read even with reverence, although no one denies that in their books there are many departures from the truth; heaven forbid that Christian readers should be so difficult to please. Nor do we immediately deprive them of the Holy Spirit. But perhaps it is not for us to dictate how that Spirit shall tune the instrument that he makes of his disciples; however he may have done this, he has done it in the way that he knew to be most conducive to the salvation of the human race. He was present in them so far as pertained to the business of the Gospel, but with this limitation, that in other respects he allowed them to be human none the less. I would not wish to say this because I think the apostles ever did make mistakes, but because I deny that the presence of some mistake must needs shake the credit of the whole of Scripture.

Again, if it seems to you unworthy that the apostles should use books to help them, what will you make of Paul, who gives instructions for books

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26 passage you adduce] Ep 769:43–68

33 Jerome] *Commentarii in Micheam* 2.5.3. (CC 76:481–2), quoted in LB VI 14D. Jerome mentions that in the opinion of some people errors occurred in the transmission of the Old Testament. He does so in support of his own view that Matthew corrected an inconsistency in Mic 5:2.

34 you say] As in line 78, a hypothetical objection

40 Augustine and Ambrose] Cf *Novum Testamentum*, LB VI 807D–810C; Ep 956:39n.

56 Paul] 2 Tim 4:13

to be sent him with his cloak, 'but especially the parchments'? Nor did Christ tell them not to read the Scriptures (to the reading of which Paul urges his beloved Timothy), but not to appear before their judges with speeches carefully prepared. But on this topic I reply more fully in a later edition of the volume, which I am now getting ready; and so I reckon it unnecessary to burden a letter with further argument.

In the same way, with the second objection you raise, on the tenth chapter of Acts, where, putting the case for the apostles, I excuse them on the ground that they learnt their Greek not from the speeches of Demosthenes but from the conversation of ordinary people: I do not deny the gift of tongues, but yet it does not follow that they could not learn their Greek from ordinary speech. Syriac at any rate they learnt from ordinary speech; why could they not do the same with Greek as well? For thanks to the victories of Alexander and the Roman empire, Egypt with most of Syria and the whole of Asia Minor, or rather, almost the whole of the East, as Jerome says, spoke Greek. For I do not suppose that the Spirit to which you refer drowned in oblivion what they had previously learnt. If however you maintain that the Greek which we see in the Apostolic Epistles is a gift from heaven, whence comes all that clumsiness of language, not to say barbarism, which we cannot attempt to conceal? For the works of the Holy Spirit are more perfect than those of nature or of human industry, for which Chrysostom is our authority. But, you say, he gave them just so much skill in the language as he thought suitable to the simplicity of the Gospel. What if the apostles possessed that already? Why need they be given it now? We are not told that the apostles spoke Greek by some miracle; we are told that they spoke in some one language, if I mistake not, and were understood by everyone. Let this by all means be what happened; there is even so no need to work a continuing series of miracles in the apostles. As often as the business of the faith called for it, they possessed the gift of tongues; they did not all have it equally, nor was it always present; we read that it happened to the apostles only once. There is also the gift of prophecy; the man to whom it was given, to explain this or that passage, would not have been able at any other time

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57 Christ] Cf Matt 10, especially 10:19, cf 10:10. Erasmus treated the problem of divine inspiration and human ignorance in the apostles more fully in his notes on Matt 2 and Acts 10 (LB VI 12–14, 476–8).

58 Paul urges] 2 Tim 3:14–16

63 second objection] Ep 769:68–83

71 Jerome] See perhaps PL 25:545–59, 26:380–2; cf LB VI 476–8; also for the following reference to Chrysostom.

87 only once] Cf LB VI 441F, commenting on Acts 2:8.

you please to explain any other passage. That same Spirit distributed his gifts according to the measure of faith, as Paul puts it.

Finally, how can it be that Jerome in so many places is not afraid to charge Paul with an imperfect knowledge of Greek? He also asserts that Luke knew more Greek than Hebrew, because he came from Antioch; and on the other hand that Paul had a better command of his native language than he had of Greek, because he was a Cilician. Again, in the second Epistle to the Corinthians he wishes his faithful Titus was present because, he says, he had greater skill in the language, as the early Greeks understand the passage. Origen, at any rate, and the Greek commentators find difficulties in Paul in many places from the uncouthness of his style, and so does Jerome. So it is not necessary that whatever was in the apostles should at once be attributed to a miracle. Christ allowed his chosen to make mistakes even after they had received the Paraclete, but not to the extent of imperilling the faith, just as today we admit that the church can err in places, but short of any risk to faith and religion. In any case, how do you know whether Christ did not wish to reserve the credit of being right without exception for himself alone? He said of himself alone 'I am the Truth'; so it may be that he who according to the opinion of the Fathers is alone innocent without spot is alone without any exception free from error.

In the third place, you lay on the rod because I express surprise that the Evangelist should be willing to misuse the word *therapeuein*, which means to cure by the remedies physicians use. To begin with, this is a point more against the translator than against Matthew, since he is held to have written in Hebrew. Secondly, the word 'misuse' need not always mean to use for a wrong purpose; for we also misuse things which we have taken for our own use from some other source, and when we use a word in a different sense, we misuse it, but to good effect. Finally a man who expresses surprise is not necessarily critical: we are surprised at things we admire, at new things, at things the cause of which we do not know – for instance, at the way iron is attracted by a magnet and the Nile floods at midsummer and the Euripus is in

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90 Paul] Rom 12:3

91 Jerome] Cf LB VI 673E–674C, 677F, 788E, 825F, 840F, 842E; PL 30:1042.

93 Luke] Cf LB VI 217A, 673E; PL 24:100, 26:18.

94 Paul] Jerome Ep 121.10 (CSEL 56:41)

96 Corinthians] 2 Cor 2:13; cf LB VI 758B–C.

106 He said] John 14:6

110 misuse] LB VI 25E; cf Ep 769:84n.

119 Euripus] The water in the narrow strait of Euripus (between Boeotia and Euboea) was said to rush in and out seven times each day and each night: *Adagia* I ix 62.

such constant ebb and flow. Thus what was not clear to me I put forward for other people to discuss. And you know that some topics are put forward for discussion in our universities in far more prejudicial terms.

It is now clear enough of itself how far off the mark your invidious suggestions are, as though I were trying to show the evangelists the way or to repair the negligence of the Holy Spirit, though I think that in reciting these charges you are recounting other men's malignant attacks and not conveying your own opinion. Otherwise how could one say anything more hostile even of an enemy? But the last point that you bring forward you claim as entirely your own; and so this is the place where you would have your Erasmus gauge how fair-minded and devoted to him is his old friend Eck. Yet I myself should have supposed this part more than any other to be other men's work, had you not expressly claimed it as your own. You disapprove of my judgment, because in the study of Scripture I have such a preference for Jerome over Augustine that I think it an impertinence to compare one with the other. To this point, dear Eck my most learned friend, I shall not reply until you have conceded that it is no discredit to be placed second by a judge who regards both candidates as outstanding. My feelings about Augustine are such as it is proper to hold of a saintly man endowed with exceptional gifts. I cast no reflections on his reputation, as you say I do, but I do not allow Jerome's reputation to be put in the shade; and he would clearly suffer injury if he were placed second to a man whom he far outdistances. I ask you, would a man insult Peter who set Christ above him? Would one wrong the archbishop of Canterbury by placing the pope over him? Would a man tarnish the glory of silver who preferred gold? But suppose there were still a doubt which of them stands first. If some particular enthusiasm made me prefer Jerome, I should not, I think, lay myself open to attack – for in these matters Paul is willing that each man should follow his own opinion – provided that I hold a very high opinion of Augustine, as indeed I do. When you credit Augustine with supreme authority after the canon of Scripture and the sacrosanct decrees of the church and in succession to the church's early pillars, who would not agree that this is going rather far? He makes no such demands on his own behalf, nor has anyone ever made such claims for him, especially since the first place in this sort of contest of reputation belongs to the Greeks, as it does in all others.

But let us consider the arguments on which you rest your case against me. You confront me with the authority of Filelfo who (you say), though he

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128 the last point] Ep 769:93–114
147 Paul] Cf 1 Cor 7:6–7.
156 Filelfo] Cf Ep 769:100n.

conceded the palm for eloquence to Jerome, set Augustine above him in dialectic, and you add out of your own head that he reckoned him supreme in the whole field of philosophy. For my part, my learned friend, I do not think Filelfo carries such weight, especially as a critic in sacred studies, that I 160 must submit to be silenced by his authority; for even in his own field, if the facts so required, I should not be very ready to give way – to say nothing boastful about myself, though he enlarged so much on his own merits. And what he said was a casual remark made in a private letter to a personal friend, though you now launch it against me like the oracle of Delphi. Everybody 165 knows it is a commonplace of the schools that Augustine among the Fathers is an outstanding theologian, an admirable philosopher, and an invincible dialectician – as though every utterance thrown off in the schools for any casual reason must be regarded as an oracle. Every class of men has its common throng, and the best has always appealed only to the few. I doubt 170 not that you yourself disagree with much that is repeated as of the first importance in our universities. All scholars, according to you, give Augustine the same position in theology that Filelfo gave him in philosophy. Not at all: I understand that there are men of consummate scholarship who think far less well of Augustine than I do. What is more, the reason why the academic 175 fraternity put Augustine above Jerome or Ambrose is partly that he is more frequently quoted by those authors who have acquired a despotic position in our universities, either because they found him easier to understand than them or because his pronouncements are more definite than theirs. Jerome is heavy going in many ways, Ambrose is made somewhat obscure by his 180 allusions; both of them, following Greek precedent, are less willing to lay down the law, the more they know.

As for what follows in your letter, I could not read it, I must admit, with a straight face. '"Every man," you say, "is a good judge of what he knows well," says the Stragirite; and there is no shortcoming in you which your 185 supporters so much regret as your failure to have read Augustine.' I find nothing in myself, good sir, which should make anyone wish to be an Erasmian, and I absolutely loathe these names of factions. We are all Christ's, and it is for his glory alone that we labour each according to his share. But who pray are these Erasmians of yours, so devoted to me that, 190 through excess of affection no doubt, they suppose me never to have set eyes on Augustine's works? If they said I did not understand them, this would

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169 oracle] Erasmus uses the phrase 'from the tripod' (on which the prophetess at Delphi sat); *Adagia* I vii 90.

184 you say] Ep 769:107–9. Erasmus pointedly repeats Eck's misspelling of Aristotle's birthplace, Stragira for Stagira.

have been abuse of an ordinary kind which I should share with many others. But what impertinence it would be to wish to compare one author with another, when one of the two you simply have not read! How for that matter could such an idea have entered your Erasmians' heads? For they cannot possibly know exactly what I have read or not read. On the contrary, if you were able, while still a young man (so they tell me) to toil assiduously at Durandus and Gabriel and their like in the academic wrestling-schools, and yet to read Augustine, did a man in his fifties like myself, who has always been more devoted to the theologians of Antiquity, never find time to read Augustine of all people? Citing him as I do constantly in books published many years ago, am I thought never to have read anything he wrote? The men you speak of suppose, no doubt, that I had never read Jerome's books before editing his works. On the contrary, Augustine was the author I read first of them all, and now reread daily as often as need arises. And the more I read him, the more I feel satisfied with my estimate of the two of them.

Will you allow me, my most learned friend, to make a conjecture about you in my turn? If what you write is what you think, you have never read anything of mine. In any case, there is scarcely a work of Augustine's which I do not quote as an authority, in more than thirty score places, if I mistake not. And after all that, you recommend me to make the acquaintance of his books! I take a more favourable view of you, in supposing you to have read everything; but all the same I urge you to read Jerome with more attention, and you will vote for my side. But here perhaps we shall find Horace's words apply: 'Three guests I have of wishes quite contrary: / As their tastes differ, so their orders vary,' or that tag in Terence 'Each man has his own opinion.' Let us stick to the facts. No one will deny what great importance lies in birthplace and education. Jerome was born at Stridon, a town so close to Italy that the Italians claim it as their own, and educated in Rome, in a capital city, under the best scholars of the day; Augustine in Africa, a barbarous region where literary studies were at an amazingly low ebb, a fact which Augustine does not conceal in his letters. Jerome, a Christian of Christian stock,

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199 Durandus and Gabriel] The names of two popular nominalists are probably selected at random. For Durand de Saint-Pourçain (d 1334) see Ep 396:101n. For Gabriel Biel (d 1495) see Ep 575:35n.

202 in books] This and some of the following statements are corroborated by C. Béné *Erasme et Saint Augustin* (Geneva 1969) 63–4 and passim. Béné shows that Erasmus' interest in Augustine dates back to the time when he entered the service of Bishop Hendrik van Bergen in 1492.

215 vote] Literally 'vote with your feet'; *Adagia* II vii 12

215 Horace's words] *Epistles* 2.2.61–2

217 Terence] *Phormio* 454; cf *Adagia* I iii 7.

imbibed the philosophy of Christ with his mother's milk; Augustine was already nearly thirty when he sat down to read the Pauline Epistles without a teacher. Jerome with all his abilities devoted thirty-five years to the study of Holy Scripture; Augustine was diverted at once to the duties of a bishop and compelled to teach what he had not yet learnt. If you do not believe me, read his own letter to Bishop Valerianus, in which he begs earnestly for a little time to learn what he is to teach others.

Now suppose, if you like, that birthplace, ability, teachers, and upbringing get equal marks on either side, and let us reckon up how much better equipped Jerome was when he took up this task – unless perhaps you regard a good knowledge of Greek and Hebrew as of little moment. All philosophy and all theology in those days belonged to the Greeks. Augustine knew no Greek; or, if he had acquired a smattering, it was not much help towards reading the Greek commentators. I am astonished how some people can credit Augustine with a perfect knowledge of Aristotelian philosophy, when he himself admits in his *Confessions* that he has read only one short book of his, and that too in a Latin version. And though in many places he handles questions involving dialectic, for which he seems to have had a natural aptitude and a strong inclination – for instance, in his *De doctrina christiana*, in the *De trinitate*, and in several short works which he wrote as a catechumen – he does not state that he has read anything beyond Porphyry's *Quinque voces* or *Praedicabilia* and *Decem rerum genera* or *Praedicamenta* and his book *De enunciatione*. Apart from that, show me a single word that might be thought to be taken from the *Priora* or *Posteriora* or the *Elenchi* or the *Topica*, to say nothing for the moment of the *Physica* and *Metaphysica* and the other voluminous works of that philosopher, particularly as in the books which he wrote as a catechumen he boasts with youthful conceit of any smattering of philosophy he had acquired, and admits himself that those books still have a touch of academic conceit in them. But what book was there in the whole library of Greek literature that Jerome had not mastered and did not have at his fingertips as though he had indexed it all? If you are ready to judge both by results, take Jerome in operation against Jovinianus, against Rufinus, against Pelagius, against the Luciferians, and tell me whether you find in him any weakness as a dialectician. If the same arguments were handled nowadays by men who have grown grey in dialectic, it would then

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229 letter] Augustine Ep 21

240 one short book] A questionable reference based, it seems, on *Confessions* 4.16; 7.9

243 short works] Cf *Retractationes* 1.1 (CSEL 36:11).

250 he boasts] Cf *Retractationes*, prologue (CSEL 36:10).

254 at his fingertips] Literally 'in ready cash'; *Adagia* IV iii 82

be clear how far Jerome stands out, except that their bad Latin and childish quibbles are beyond him. And yet Augustine calls Cicero a mock philosopher, being of course the genuine article himself, though Cicero, if I am not mistaken, had read somewhat more widely in Greek philosophy than Augustine had in Holy Scripture.

I could adduce many passages specifically which bear on this question from the works of both Fathers and so continue the discussion. But that would exceed the limits of a letter, and there would be some risk of my seeming eager to do so, in the eyes of Augustine's passionate supporters; and I am no less devoted to him than they are and have perhaps read him with more attention and a deeper understanding of his gifts than they have, while they, having had no grounding in humane studies, merely collect in the course of desultory reading a few verities, as they call them. Other men's experience I know not; but in myself at least I find good reason to say that I learn more of Christian philosophy from a single page of Origen than from ten of Augustine. And besides Origen, Jerome had so many teachers. All the same, my love of Augustine is great enough for me to have attempted in an edition of his works to do for him what I did for Jerome.

And so, to draw to a close, most learned Eck, while you urge me not to dim the glory of Augustine – which I am so far from doing that I would rather see it enhanced – I in return urge you not to dim the glory of Jerome, who added lustre to Augustine himself, for it was only after his dispute with Jerome that he began emphatically to make progress. Let us rather with equal enthusiasm strive to add the greatest possible lustre to them both – better still, to imitate them. I myself long ago as a young man held the opinion you do now. I conceive that added years and wider reading have added something in the way of judgment. I have changed my mind, not because I have a less exalted opinion of Augustine, of whom I think more highly as an old man than I did in my youth, but because I have watched Jerome at closer quarters. Maybe you will have the same experience. If you do not, you will agree with me none the less that I may be allowed to differ from you in places without impairing our friendship, just as the friendship between Augustine and Jerome was not affected by a difference of opinion on several subjects.

Another point. When you promise to give me advice diligently on other

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260 Augustine] *De civitate Dei* 2.27

273 page of Origen] See Bietenholz *History and Biography* 41–6; cf Ep 843:435–6.

275 have attempted] Erasmus' edition of Augustine for Froben's press only materialized in 1528–9 (cf Ep 2157; Bietenholz *History and Biography* 77–9), but it had a long prehistory; cf Epp 581:22–4, 922:40–1.

283 young man] See above line 202n.

292 When you promise] Cf Ep 769:93–4.

occasions as well, if you find that by this service you have been a help to me, I have no time, my excellent friend, to answer any and every false accusation – for who is so illiterate that he cannot somehow invent charges to bring against another man's book? – nor am I so ill disposed to you that I would have you devote your valuable time to any but the most valuable activities. Good advice is not unwelcome from any source, but some men are too ignorant for their advice to be any use to me; and yet they are the severest critics of them all. Some men I could name give me advice in a way that can only misrepresent me in hopes of getting a small supply of reputation for themselves. Some again are so carried away by the love of putting others right that in advising a fellow man they seem to forget that they are men themselves. And yet the man who finds fault cannot expect us to make allowances as we do for him who sets out to instruct us.

I must thank you for the books you sent me. I admire your fluency and add my tribute to your triumphant reception. But I shall rejoice with you still more when you are blessed with leisure and with the spirit to ponder the secrets of the philosophy of Christ in deepest silence and in your inmost heart, when the Bridegroom will lead you into his chamber and into his store. When in those essays of yours you pile such tributes on the name of Erasmus, I can accept none of it except your warm and friendly feelings; the salvoes of applause and all the prizes I leave to others, for of such glories I have had all I want. Forgive these hasty sheets: I write under a double burden of ill health and research. If I fall short of what I owe you now, it shall be made good another day.

Urbanus Rhegius I know as a learned man from the letter he himself wrote me and suppose him a civilized one from the service he did me; pray give him my warmest greetings. To the most illustrious Duke Ernest I have dedicated the Quintus Curtius lately published by Schürer, that there might be some evidence at least that I have not forgotten his kindness to me. Farewell.

Basel, 15 May 1518

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306 books you sent] Cf Ep 769:13n, 128n.

311 store] Song of Solomon 1:3, 2:4 etc

315 ill health] Cf Ep 847.

317 Urbanus Rhegius] Rhegius was Eck's pupil and his junior colleague at the University of Ingolstadt. He was now preparing to leave for Constance; see Ep 386.

319 Ernest] Of Bavaria: Ep 704. The words 'lately published by Schürer' may have been added in printing.

845 / From Thomas More [England, c May 1518]

A fragment printed in Thomas Stapleton *Tres Thomae* (Douai: J. Bogardus 1588) 73, from a collection of More's papers taken to Douai probably by John Harris, a former secretary of More's. The preface referred to (BRE Ep 72, 23 February 1518) was written by Beatus Rhenanus for the Froben edition of More's *Epigrammata* (together with the *Utopia*, etc; cf Epp 634–5) of March 1518. The tentative date was assigned by Allen in view of More's statement that his thanks to Beatus were overdue. For Beatus Rhenanus see Ep 327, 596 introductions.

Rhenanus I am especially fond of and I owe him a great debt on account of his most handsome preface. I would have written to thank him long ago, had not indomitable lethargy restrained me like the gout.

846 / From Pieter Gillis Antwerp, 24 May [1518]

This letter was first printed by Allen from the autograph now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford: MS Lat misc c 20 f 80 (olim MS Autogr c 9 f 74).

Pieter Gillis (cf Ep 184), secretary of the town of Antwerp, was one of Erasmus' closest friends; Erasmus was often a guest in his house and relied on him for the forwarding of letters and money.

TO MASTER ERASMUS FROM P. GILLIS, GREETING

Thanks be to heaven, I am now much better. If all is well with you, I am the happiest of men. Please let me know how you are and how things are going. Ever since you left Cologne I have heard no news of you. A bundle of letters from Budé must have reached you, I have no doubt. Franz the bookseller coming from Paris brought the news that Glareanus has been chosen to succeed Fausto, who has died. I am very glad for the sake of a man with poetry in him, of whom you often give me such a charming description.

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846

2 much better] After a prolonged state of ill health; cf Ep 597:23–4 and the index of CWE 5.

4 Cologne] See Ep 843 introduction.

5 Budé] Guillaume Budé was an eminent Greek scholar and promoter of humanistic studies at the French court. For the letters in question see Ep 810 introduction.

5 Franz] Birckmann, the Cologne bookseller, maintained a store in Antwerp; cf Ep 258:14n.

7 Fausto] Andrelini (cf Ep 84 introduction). For the death of Erasmus' old friend

I beg you to keep a watchful eye on the Athanasius, and not to allow it to be taken apart. I should be sorry to hurt the canon from whom I borrowed it, for if he did not get it back I do not see what excuse I could possibly offer. I could wish the New Testament were finished to your satisfaction and that you were here with us. Everyone likes you beyond question both here and in Louvain. There are some of our magistrates who constantly ask after your health; they have your welfare so much at heart.

Ferdinand, Charles' brother, is expected among us. Rumour has it that the heer van Veere, the admiral and commander of the convoy, has landed. Farewell.

Give my greetings to Beatus Rhenanus, my dearest friend, as of course he is, especially because he is so dear to you, and I am your best and truest Pylades.

Antwerp, the morrow of Pentecost

To the eminent theologian and master of every branch of learning,

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and the appointment of a new poet royal see Ep 810:489n; for the Swiss humanist Henricus Glareanus see Ep 440 introduction.

9 Athanasius] Erasmus edited some texts by Athanasius in 1527 (cf Ep 1790), but these can hardly be meant here. No doubt Gillis was concerned about a manuscript containing a Latin translation of Theophylact's commentary on the Epistles of Paul, which was often attributed to Athanasius. The manuscript, which he had borrowed, was apparently then at Froben's press and thus in danger of being taken apart for the convenience of the compositors. (This seems the likely sense, but the verb *distrahatur* could also mean 'sold.') Erasmus made frequent use of Theophylact's commentary for the *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*. In the 1518–19 edition he still referred to the author as Vulgarius on pp 245, 260 of the *Annotationes*. But then comparison with the Greek text of Theophylact led to the identification of the author, and the correct name appears on the title page of the volume containing the text and in subsequent editions of the New Testament. There is an edition of Athanasius' works in Latin (Strasbourg: J. Knobloch March 1522) that includes the commentary but states that the attribution to Theophylact was widely accepted (f 236 verso).

12 New Testament] See Ep 864 introduction.

14 Louvain] When leaving Louvain for a summer in Basel, Erasmus may have anticipated increased opposition in his absence (cf Epp 809 introduction, 843:538n). He was seriously considering a permanent move to England (see Epp 834, 886 introductions). His fears were partially confirmed by Ep 852:54–7.

17 Veere] Adolph of Burgundy (cf Ep 93 introduction). In 1517 he became admiral in succession to Philip of Burgundy, bishop of Utrecht, and he was in charge of the expedition which took Prince Charles to Spain. In the summer of 1518, when Ferdinand arrived from Spain (see Ep 917 introduction), Adolph organized a splendid and extravagant welcome for him at Middelburg; cf NNBW VIII 190–1.

21 Pylades] The proverbial friend of Orestes; cf Ep 849:11–12.

Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, his second father and most respected teacher. In Basel.

847 / To Pierre Barbier Basel, 31 May 1518

Epp 847–8 are the only ones to be copied into the Deventer Letter-book by Hand E (cf Allen I 605–6); evidently this was a temporary secretary taken on at Basel. For Barbier, a chaplain, who was now in Spain with the court of King Charles, cf Ep 443 introduction.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND BARBIER, GREETING

I reached Basel precisely on Ascension day, after a somewhat unpleasant journey mainly on account of the heat. Work on my New Testament now occupies me, and it is being printed. But in these parts a new kind of plague is spreading throughout Germany, which attacks a great many people with coughs, headache, and internal pains and kills a number of them, but the majority get over it. It went for me too after ten days, and I have now for some days been very poorly. I should have got quit of this place within three months if my health had been favourable. I had brought my work to such a point; but one must yield to fate. If my excellent Maecenas and you yourself are both well, I have good reason to bear my own misfortune more lightly. Farewell.

Basel, the morrow of Trinity Sunday 1518

I wrote some time ago both to you and to my lord the chancellor from Louvain, on your instructions. Give Guy my best wishes.

848 / To Thomas More Basel, 31 May [1518]

Cf Ep 847 introduction.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND MORE, GREETING

I reached Basel precisely on Ascension day, after a somewhat unpleasant journey on account of the heat, but safe and sound none the less. But there is

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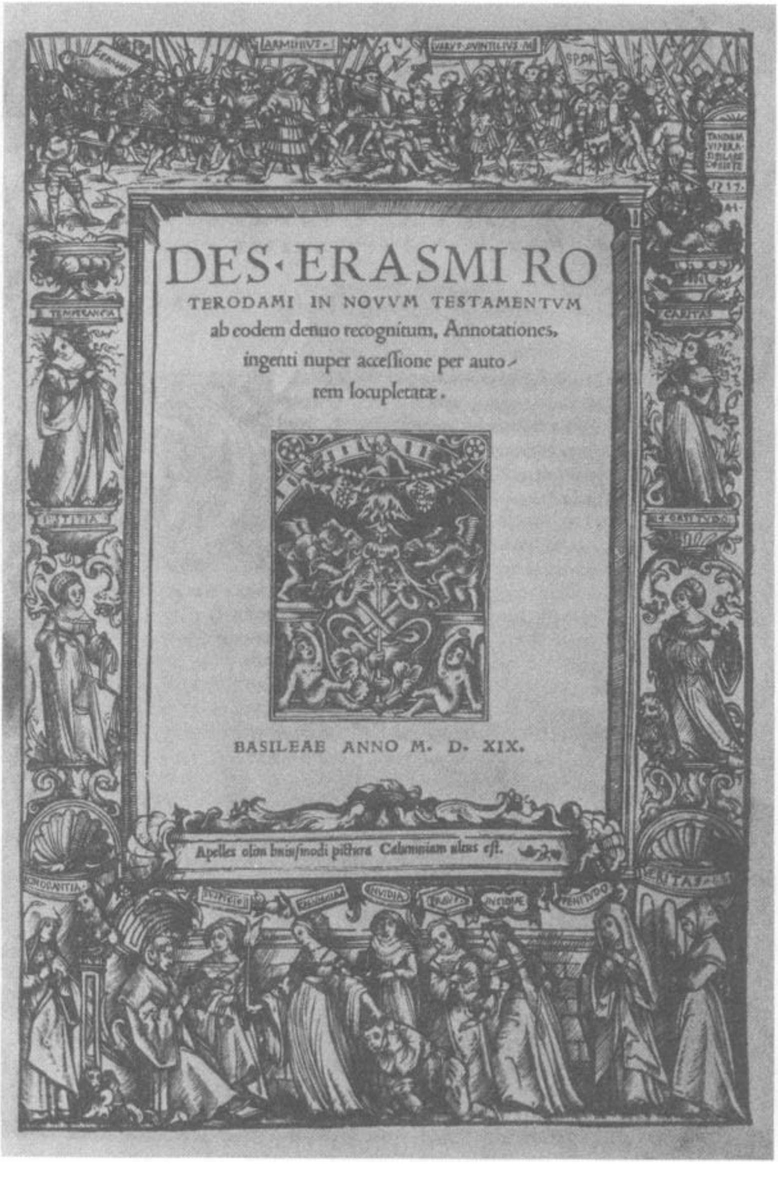
2 Ascension] 13 May 1518

7 some days] Ill health continued to bother Erasmus during most of his stay at Basel (cf Epp 844:314–15, 848, 855:19–23, 860:7–12, 869:21), and he fell seriously ill on his journey back to Louvain; cf Ep 867.

10 Maecenas] Chancellor Jean Le Sauvage; see Epp 410 introduction, 852:72n.

14 I wrote] Epp 793–4

15 Guy] Morillon; see Ep 532 introduction.



DES· ERASMI RO
TERODAMI IN NOVVM TESTAMENTVM
ab eodem denuo recognitum, Annotationes,
ingenti nuper acceſſione per autorem locupletatæ.

BASILEAE ANNO M. D. XIX.

Apelles olim huiuſmodi pictura Calumniam ultus eſt.

TEMPERANCIA
CARITAS
INVIDIA
INSIDIAE

Erasmus, ed and tr, *Novum Testamentum* title page
Basel: Froben 1519
One of three copies printed on vellum;
this copy was owned by Cuthbert Tunstall
The Philip H. and A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, Philadelphia

a new kind of plague now spreading all through Germany, the symptoms of which are cough and headache, in some cases leading to delirium, with internal pains. My friends had written to say it had now passed off, but after about ten days it got me, and I have now been some days in a poor way. But I begin to mend. It has killed many people but let the majority go free. The work on my New Testament is now proceeding. I have given instructions for three copies to be struck off on vellum. One had been ordered by Tunstall. Had my health been favourable for two months at least, I should have brought it to a point where it could have been finished even in my absence. But we are driven by fate, and fate we must obey. If the gods are kind, I shall return to Brabant next September. But it will be impossible to finish the work before the next fair. Please let Tunstall too know this. Farewell, dearest of friends.

Basel, Trinity Monday

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848

6 My friends] See Ep 801–2; but their answers and Erasmus' inquiry concerned the bubonic plague; cf Epp 847:7n, 861:7n.

8 begin to mend] Hypothetical text, since two or three words are missing in the Deventer Letter-book; the new secretary may have had some difficulty with Erasmus' handwriting.

10 on vellum] Cf Ep 886:22–4. Tunstall's copy passed to the library of York Minster and is now in the collection of the Rosenbach Foundation in Philadelphia. Another copy was given to Erard de la Marck (cf Allen I 43:40–2, Ep 738 introduction). Unfortunately it cannot be identified as one or the other of the two remaining copies on vellum which have also survived. One is in the Lambeth Palace Library, London (**E 1965, 1519), purchased in 1824 from the Sir Mark Sykes collection. Its leather binding shows the date of 1579, and on the inside cover is a manuscript epitaph on Erasmus by Rumoldus Tutorius (Voocht?) of Antwerp. The third copy on vellum, without any indication of its provenance, is in Christ's College, Cambridge (CC 3.3).

10 Tunstall] Cuthbert Tunstall (cf Ep 207:25n) had taken an active interest in Erasmus' revision of the New Testament when the two met in Brussels in the summer of 1517 (cf Epp 571 introduction, 597:18–20). Tunstall was a member of an English embassy.

13 fate] Adapted from Seneca *Oedipus* 980; cf Ep 794:91.

15 fair] In time for the Frankfurt autumn fair; cf Ep 864 introduction.

849 / From Pieter Gillis Antwerp, 19 June [1518]

This letter was published in the *Farrago*.

TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM FROM PIETER GILLIS, GREETING

I can see you are very busy – four letters from me, and you have not answered! A courier arrived here lately with a letter from you to Jan de Neve. Franz was away in England while he was here, and the letter was eventually delivered to me, with a letter from Froben which was particularly welcome.

Borssele has been given a deanery, as they call it. Passing here on his way to Zeeland he paid me a visit and told me you had reached Basel, which I was very glad to hear. Can you wonder that I was glad, when at any mention of your name I rejoice and jump for joy? Do please, dear Erasmus, if you ever have a chance, find time to send your Pylades (for so you call me with no less sincerity than truth) something in the way of a letter. I was not a little surprised that you never let me know you had had the letter from Budé that I sent you, all the more so as meanwhile you had twice sent a letter to Neve.

Bade has been with us, and we had a merry time. Lefèvre d'Etaples came up in conversation at table; he is sorry that he ever annoyed you and

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849

2 four letters] Only Ep 846 survives. The two letters to Neve (line 14) are also lost.

4 Neve] The regent of the College of the Lily, Erasmus' residence at Louvain; cf Epp 298 introdution, 643:14n.

4 Franz] Birckmann; also line 41.

5 Froben] The Basel printer Johann Froben (cf Ep 419 introduction) had perhaps sent a note accompanied by the new *Utopia;* cf Ep 845.

7 Borssele] Thanks to Erasmus' efforts (cf Ep 805), the appointment of Jan Becker of Borssele (cf Ep 291 introduction) as professor of Latin to the Collegium Trilingue seemed assured (cf Ep 836:9–10), but at the beginning of June it was learned in Louvain that he had preferred a comfortable benefice. Exercising a right belonging to the family, Anna van Borssele, Lady of Veere, and her son, Adolph of Burgundy, nominated him dean of the chapter of Zanddijk or Zandenburg, which had recently been transferred to the town of Veere. He was now on his way to take up the appointment; cf Ep 932:50–2; de Vocht CTL I 263.

11 Pylades] Cf Ep 846:21n.

13 from Budé] See Ep 810 introduction.

15 Bade] Josse Bade, the Paris scholar and printer, was a native of Brabant; cf Ep 183 introduction.

will never publish a reply till the Greek calends. Paolo Emilio has handed over the remaining books of his histories to Bade to be printed. I understand also that Budé is collecting his letters. I suppose he will get them published to the great admiration and profit of the learned world.

We have among us (would you believe it?) that mischief-maker Highstreet, who is as universally popular as any screech-owl. He is now engaged on something entirely unsuited to his Order – selling those perfectly idiotic pamphlets of his which he called his *Apologia*. These are being hawked around by those out-at-elbow itinerant pamphlet-sellers, and the profit such as it is is pocketed by our scrofulous and pitiful friend Highstreet. As for him, no one deigns to talk to him, no one even greets him, except perhaps a few crazy and worn-out bawds, though even they do not think the wretch worthy of their society. He scrapes together money from wherever he can, but it is all gold with a curse on it.

A dialogue by an unknown author, but a very well informed one, about Julius is on sale here everywhere. Everybody buys it, people talk about nothing else. I very much wish you had seen it; though no doubt it will be on sale in your part of the world as well. Ferdinand, our most illustrious prince, has made a happy landing accompanied by a few of our own countrymen. He is said on reliable authority to have a friendly and affable disposition and an excellent character, and to be astonishingly good at Latin and quite a good speaker.

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17 Greek calends] Never, the Greeks not having calends; cf *Adagia* I v 84. For Lefèvre's intentions see Ep 721 introduction.

18 histories] See Ep 719:7n. Without changing the title page, Bade added to books 1–4 (published c 1517) first books 5–7 and subsequently books 8–9. A tenth book was added in a later edition.

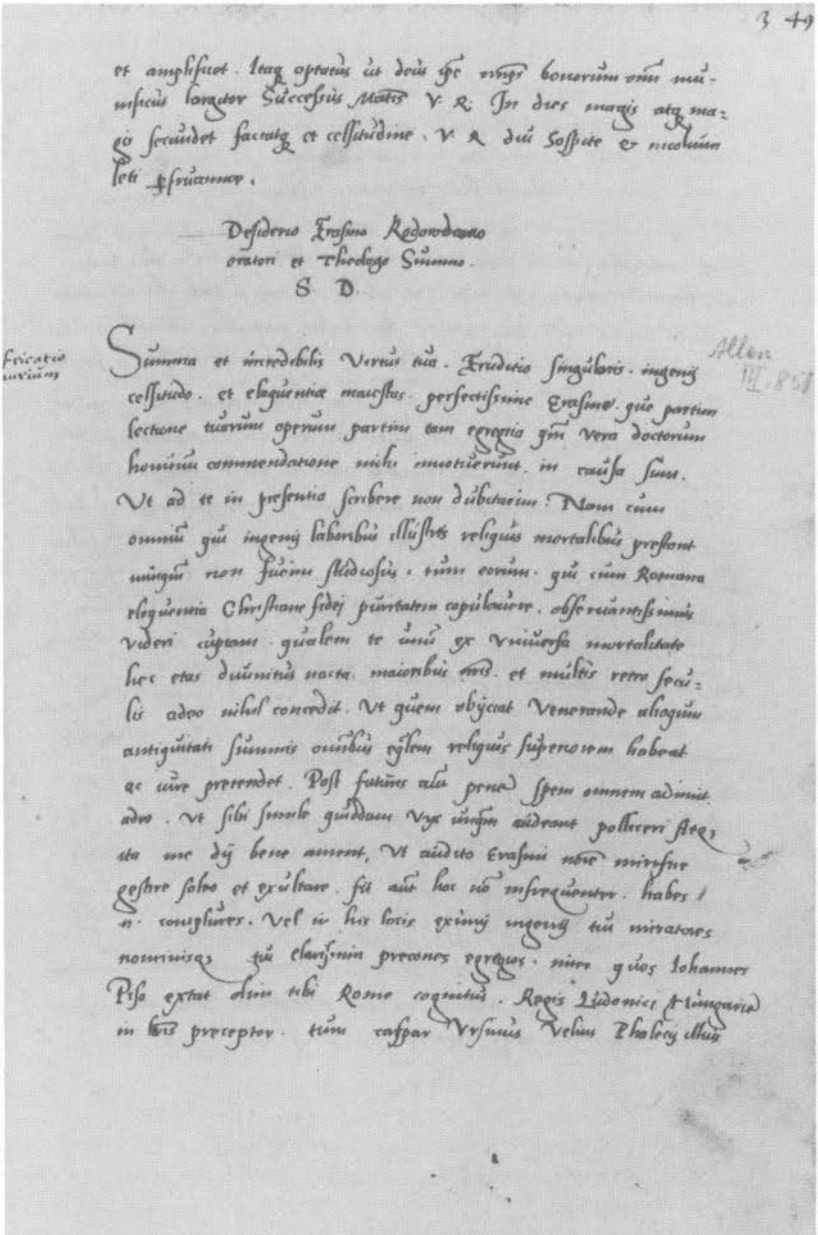
19 published] *Epistolae Gulielmi Budaei* (Paris: J. Bade 20 August 1520)

22 Highstreet] 'Hypsistrotus' in the Latin text refers to the Dominican Jacob of Hoogstraten (cf Ep 290:11n). His journey to the Netherlands – in September 1518 he was at Louvain visiting his old university (cf Ep 1006 introduction), but he subsequently returned to Cologne – came amid the continuing conflicts in faction-ridden Cologne (cf Ep 821:19n). It is little wonder that his opponents, the Reuchlinists, spread some compromising rumours about the motives of his journey (cf Epp 877–8), but there is no doubt that he was campaigning for his cause wherever he went. For his *Apologia* and the after-effects cf Epp 680:28n, 1078 introduction.

30 gold] Literally 'gold of Toulouse'; cf *Adagia* I x 98.

32 Julius] The circulation of the *Julius exclusus* (cf Ep 502 introduction) combined with the presence of Hoogstraten was bound to cause Erasmus some anxiety (cf Epp 821:19n, 877). Martens printed the *Julius* in September 1518 (NK 3283–4).

34 Ferdinand] See Ep 917 introduction.



349

et amplificet. Itaque optamus ut deus ipse rerum bonorum omnium mu-
nificus largitor successus Maiestatis V. R. in dies magis atque ma-
gis secundet faciatque et celsitudine. V. R. diu sospite et incolumi
leti perfruamur.

Desiderio Erasmo Roterodamo
oratori et Theologo summo.
S. D.

Fricatio aurium

Allen
III. 850

Summa et incredibilis virtus tua. Eruditio singularis. ingenii
celsitudo. et eloquentie maiestas. perfectissime Erasme. que partim
lectione tuorum operum partim tam egregia quam vera doctorum
hominum commendatione mihi innotuerunt. in causa sunt.
Ut ad te in presentia scribere non dubitarim. Nam cum
omnium qui ingenii laboribus illustres reliquis mortalibus prestant
nunquam non fuerim studiosus. tum eorum. qui cum Romana
eloquentia Christiane fidei puritatem copularint. observantissimus
videri cupiam. qualem te unum ex universa mortalitate
hec etas divinitus nacta. maioribus nostris. et multis retro secu-
lis adeo nihil concedit. Ut quem obiiciat venerande alioquin
antiquitati summis omnibus equalem reliquis superiorem habeat
ac iure pretendet. Post futuris aliis prorsus spem omnem adimit
adeo. ut sibi simile quiddam vix umquam audeant polliceri. Atque
ita me dii bene ament, ut audito Erasmi nomine mirifice
gestire soleo et exultare. fit autem hoc non infrequenter. habes
n. complures. Vel in his locis eximii ingenii tui miratores
nominisque tui clarissimi precones egregios. inter quos Iohannes
Piso extat olim tibi Rome cognitus. Regis Ludovici Hungarie
in literis preceptor. tum Caspar Ursinus Velius [illegible] illius

Letter from Johannes Thurzo to Erasmus, Epistle 850
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, MS Clm 965, 349

Dr Marcus Laurinus has been with me for a few days. We talked and we gossipped about nothing but you, and he sent you most hearty greetings. Sixtinus has written to me. Of More I have no news. Franz has left England for Paris. If Beatus Rhenanus is in good health and spirits, I am highly delighted. Farewell, dear Erasmus. My precious wife, who is now near her time, sends you at least a thousand greetings.

Antwerp, 19 June [1519]

850 / From Johannes Thurzo [Wrocław, c 20 June 1518]

The only source for this letter is a manuscript copy in a collection of papers from Wrocław, now in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich: Clm 965 pp 349–53. (For the contents and the history of this collection cf Allen's headnote and an addendum, VI xix–xx; *Catalogus codicum latinorum bibliothecae regiae Monacensis*, second edition, I-1, Munich 1892, 217–18.) The letter is clearly contemporary with Ep 851. Answered by Ep 943, it initiated a correspondence which was to continue until Thurzo's death.

Johannes Thurzo (1464–1520) belonged to an influential family that rose to prominence under the Jagiełło rulers of Poland and Hungary. After studies in Cracow and Italy he became bishop of Wrocław in 1506.

TO DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, THE EMINENT WRITER AND THEOLOGIAN, GREETING

Your supreme excellence that passes all belief, your extraordinary learning, your lofty genius and grandeur of style, Erasmus most complete of men, are known to me partly from the perusal of your works and partly from the praise of learned men which is as true as it is notable; and hence it comes that I write to you at this moment without hesitation. All those who have won fame by works of genius and stand above the rest of men have always attracted me, and those especially who have combined with Roman eloquence the purity of Christian faith inspire me with the wish to show my admiration. Of this kind you are the one man out of the whole human race vouchsafed by providence to our generation, which thus falls in no way short of our ancestors and of many past centuries, for it possesses and can justly put forward one who is a match for that Antiquity otherwise so venerable, equal

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39 Laurinus] Canon at Bruges and a close friend of Erasmus; see Ep 651 introduction.

41 Sixtinus] Johannes Sixtinus was a Frieslander in London; see Ep 112 introduction.

43 wife] Cornelia Sandrien married Gillis in 1514; see Ep 312:93n.

to all its greatest men and above the rest; while he leaves posterity with scarcely a hope, so that they hardly dare promise themselves that they will ever see the like.

As heaven is my witness, it is remarkable how the sound of Erasmus' name revives and cheers me. And this happens fairly often; for even in these parts you have several admirers of your genius and distinguished heralds of your famous name. Among them are Johannes Piso, whom you knew long ago in Rome, the tutor of King Louis of Hungary, and Caspar Ursinus Velius, author of that published poem in hendecasyllables on your birthday. Besides which, my ears are never sated with the reading of Erasmus' works; indeed I doubt if any man exists, of all those who have once looked into your books, who has not laid them down under compulsion rather than of his own free will. So it is: in reading books of the kind that you produce everyone finds any interruption disagreeable; to go on reading is a pure delight, and unbroken labour is a pleasure. For in all your writings, numerous and richly furnished as they are, lies Homer's lotus, which bewitches the minds of your readers so that they can by no means be distracted from that desire that can never be satisfied. With him you share this special property, that the reader of your works never feels satiety creep over him; and if perchance a man should feel that he has had enough, it takes longer for this to happen to your devotee, inasmuch as your work is a more sacred thing than his poetry.

And so, when I reflect upon you as such a perfect work of nature satisfied at last, complete on every count, I am wonderfully fired with a desire to meet you. With this in mind, if I were ever to discover that you are in some place within reach of a week's journey, I would promptly uproot myself and hasten to you, and would indeed go farther – to Belgium even – if business permitted. Surely if many visitors from Cadiz came to Rome to set eyes on Livy, why should not the man who has heard Erasmus' name and sipped the cup of his more than human learning, come to him wherever he

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850

21 Johannes] Really Jacobus Piso. Erasmus had met him in Italy, 1508–9 (cf Ep 216). By 1515 he had returned home and become the tutor of Louis II (1506–26), king of Hungary since 1516.

22 Ursinus] For Ursinus and his poem see Epp 548, 851.

24 sated] Reading *obsaturari*, a word used by Thurzo in Ep 1047, for *obturari* of the manuscript copy.

30 Homer's lotus] *Odyssey* 9.94–9; *Adagia* II vii 62

32 satisfied] Translating *inexplebili*, which is probably what Thurzo meant, although the manuscript has *inexplicabili*, 'that cannot be explained'

43 Livy] Pliny *Letters* 2.3.8

44 sipped the cup] *Adagia* I ix 92

may be, from the uttermost parts of the earth, to contemplate him and admire him? Indeed when I consider how much of both profit and pleasure I derive from the reading of your books, I cannot set forth how much I feel I owe you – more at any rate than I can ever repay. And yet to give some concrete evidence of my respect for you, I had it in mind to send you a present, far less than you deserve, but perhaps acceptable to a man of your exceptional modesty. And so I will – quite soon, when I have access to a reliable courier and know where you are to be found. In the mean time, I propose to regale myself with the delightful thought of you, in company with Caspar Ursinus, my protégé and your most devoted follower. Let me end with the sincere wish that immortal God may preserve you in health and wealth for his service and the benefit of us all, as long and happily as may be. Farewell.

Johannes Thurzo, bishop of Wrocław, with my own hand

851 / From Caspar Ursinus Velius — Wrocław, 20 June 1518

Ursinus had gone to Italy in 1510 with Matthäus Lang, bishop of Gurk, coadjutor of Salzburg, and soon thereafter cardinal. In 1518 he went to Wrocław, where Johannes Thurzo (cf Ep 850), an old patron from his student days, had nominated him to a canonry. Ursinus' modesty is artificial; he was already poet laureate and highly regarded in Germany. This letter was answered by Ep 944 and published in the *Farrago*.

CASPAR URSINUS VELIUS TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Last year I was living a retired life in a small town in Bavaria, being blessed with leisure (but the leisure of a courtier, not a man of letters, and entirely cut off from liberal studies), the cardinal of Gurk, in whose service I then was, having gone to Belgium with the emperor; and being deprived of all support in the literary way I made bold, at great hazard and risk to my name and reputation, to revive the ancient custom I used to follow in Rome, I mean of trying to write, and began very boldly and rashly to set down my foolish ideas. Hence came that birthday poem addressed to you, as a man hardly to be matched at this time in the whole of Europe for high standing and high character, and at any rate by common consent our greatest scholar, which had a more successful outcome than its style deserved. Plunged as I was at

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49 a present] His presents were sent with Ep 1047.

851

2 small town] Probably Mühldorf am Inn, the seat of Lang's government; cf *Konrad Peutingers Briefwechsel* (Munich 1923) Ep 177.

9 birthday poem] Cf Ep 548:5n, 6n.

that time in the troubles of court life, the necessary peace of mind had been denied me. My critical judgment and such power of invention as I might once have possessed had sunk to a low ebb, my studies having been interrupted for ... and more. I lacked the critical eye of good scholars, and there was no supply of books to help me as I tried prematurely to swim without the aid of cork. What else could you expect? Before one could cook a dish of greens, the poem I had written lay before me, my bantling was born before I was ready to give birth; whence everyone may infer that I did all I could to procure a miscarriage. In any case, I did not compose it with the idea that such a worthless and inchoate piece of verse should be hurried into print and come into the hands of the public, for it had been sent to be read by Riccardo Bartolini, to whom I had the habit of showing all my odd pieces in confidence, and to no one else; and he went beyond his brief in this respect and was not afraid to pass it on to you. Your poor friend Ursinus is ashamed, heartily ashamed, that his production should have got out; he ought to have exercised his modest wits on some theme of no importance and not on such a great man. O the rashness and folly of my behaviour! I set out to praise Aeneas when I was not yet capable of extolling a gnat.

I have made two mistakes, both of them serious and intolerable: I see this clearly, and I am very sorry. For one thing, so far are you (as I now perceive) from being honoured by such youthful efforts that I feel I have actually damaged your reputation, and my blockhead Muse is responsible. And then, what is much worse, when I tried my hand at this unfamiliar kind of composition, I was not yet sufficiently familiar with the distinguished events of your pure and holy life, nor had I yet seen all the works – so various and so invaluable – that bear the name of that most fertile author Erasmus. Consequently I revive from time to time my plan to revise those ill-timed

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16 for ... and more] Something seems to be missing from the Latin text.

17 without the aid of cork] *Adagia* I viii 42

18 dish of greens] *Adagia* III vii 5

22 into print] Ursinus' *Genethliacon* was first printed with a collection of Erasmus' correspondence, *Epistolae sanequam elegantes* (Louvain: Martens April 1517). Bartolini was in Antwerp at the time (cf Epp 547–8), and Pieter Gillis of Antwerp, the editor of the collection, did not act without Erasmus' approval; see CWE 3 349.

30 a gnat] The *Culex*, a poem by an unknown author on the death of a gnat, passed in Antiquity and later as an early work of Virgil, a practice-piece for his *Aeneid.*

34 blockhead Muse] *Adagia* I i 37

39 revise] In his *Poemata* (Basel: Froben 1522) ff i 1 verso–k 3 verso, Ursinus made a number of corrections which were adopted in the later editions of Erasmus' correspondence. The revised form (LB I (20)–(22)) mentions many of Erasmus' early publications.

hendecasyllables that they may be filled out and re-examined to the best of my ability before appearing ultimately in a more elegant and fuller form, especially as I am strongly recommended to undertake this task by that most honourable prince Johannes Thurzo, lord bishop of Wrocław, a most effective Maecenas of all men of learning and a man of no small achievements himself. He has the highest opinion of your singular qualities and your outstanding scholarship, coupled with special affection and sincere respect; and I simply must do as he suggests, both to give the greatest possible pleasure to his lordship, to whom I owe everything, and to give the impression that I have taken thought for my own reputation. In the mean time, most learned Erasmus, I beg you, by the rich endowments of your genius and the immortality that awaits your pious labours, to take in good part what has been published in your honour without my knowledge or permission, and to give the poem I now send, which is perhaps a worse poem and comes from a humble press, a welcome that does not belie the kind and great man you are. And pray consent to place the name of Ursinus, who loves and respects you so much, in your list of friends, even if he must take very much a back seat, and spare him some affection in return. Farewell.

From Wrocław, 20 June 1518

852 / From Maarten van Dorp — Louvain, 14 July 1518

This letter shows that Dorp, a Louvain professor, was now on terms of intimate friendship with Erasmus (cf Epp 304, 596 introductions) and, moreover, anxious to be known as Erasmus' friend in Basel and elsewhere. Unfortunately for him, this letter was not published right away in the *Auctarium* (cf Ep 861 introduction). Contemporaries could read it for the first time in the *Farrago* of October 1519 (cf Ep 1009 introduction), and meanwhile some of them continued to remember Dorp's earlier criticisms of Erasmus' work (cf Epp 1000A, 1044). This letter answers one Erasmus has sent from Basel (line 3) and another sent earlier from Cologne (lines 91–2), both missing.

MAARTEN VAN DORP TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, THE ACKNOWLEDGED LEADER IN THE FIELD OF LEARNING, GREETING

The receipt of your letter, dear Erasmus and most honoured friend, gave me unspeakable satisfaction, and no less was the pleasure with which I heard of

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53 poem I now send] A hexameter poem (cf Ep 944:5–6) addressed to Johannes Thurzo. Erasmus printed it in the Martens edition of Helius Eobanus' *Hodeoporicon* (cf Ep 870 introduction); it is also in Ursinus' *Poemata*, f m 2 recto–m 3 verso. LB I (20) reprints the last part.

the arrival of your man Jacobus; so much so that I promptly instructed our friend Dirk, that devotee of Bacchus, on no account to let him depart until we could have a talk, until we could dine together. My plan was to fill him with food and myself with conversation and good news. So I asked him anxiously how you were and how you have been all this time; how far you have progressed with the great work; whether Froben was engaged on anything by Erasmus or any other author – in short, I thought of everything. To all of which Jacobus gave me quite satisfactory replies. While we were absorbed in conversation, picture Dirk absorbed in drinking, and by no means slow to play his part, for he too was not meanwhile left out of the conversation. He spoke, or should I say interrupted, in almost all languages – German, French, Italian, Latin – so that you might suppose he was some character from the apostolic age reborn, and he bravely challenged Jerome, the great linguist, not perhaps in elegance but in the number of the tongues he spoke.

Besides which, I asked him for news of the excellent Baer, the excellent Fabricius Capito, the excellent Rhenanus (Beatus by name and beatitude itself in fact); whose bare names, dear Erasmus, give a lift to my spirits. Although I am quite unworthy of their affection, they themselves richly deserve not only my affection but my respect as well. And I would indeed that they knew of my feelings towards them. Rhenanus in particular, by the zeal and vigilance with which he corrects the best authors, has made all scholars ready to acknowledge his help. And Fabricius: think of the light he has thrown by his most laborious Principles of elementary Hebrew on that language they call sacred! Baer's gifts again are beyond all doubt, for was he not unanimously placed first at Paris? To these outstanding people, this triumvirate, as it were, pray, dear Erasmus, give my quite special greetings. Tell them that there is one Dorp by name, who has a great enthusiasm for them. How fortunate you are, Erasmus, to live in the daily society of such splendid men on such close and friendly terms! And on the other side, how

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852

5 Jacobus] Nepos (cf Ep 595:11n) had gone to Basel with Erasmus, but had now been sent back with letters. Subsequently he returned to Basel and stayed on after Erasmus' own departure to complete the proof-reading of the New Testament; see Ep 886:29–30.

6 Dirk] Martens, the Louvain printer; cf Ep 263:10n.

10 progessed] See Ep 864 introduction.

18 linguist] Cf 'Vita Hieronymi' *Opuscula* 141, 152–3.

19 Baer ... Capito] Ludwig Baer and Wolfgang Faber (or Fabricius) Capito were theologians at Basel; see Epp 488, 459 introductions.

27 Principles] The *Hebraicarum institutionum libri duo;* cf Ep 600:26n.

29 Paris] In his graduating class; see Ep 413:13–14.

nearly they approach the gods, enjoying your presence among them as they do! My soul upon it, life has nothing to offer so delightful and so gay, so frank and easy.

As for your ill health, I was sorry to hear it had troubled you, and am equally glad it has departed. The honourable attentions which I hear were paid you, quite rightly, by Pucci, the papal legate, gave me great satisfaction. Everything in your letter was entirely satisfactory. Only one thing troubled me, that this fire lit by the people in Cologne should not yet have been put out, as it most certainly ought to be. I cannot think how such a stupid idea ever entered their heads as either to compose or to publish those ridiculous, foolish, and crazy *Lamentationes*. Besides, what was less called-for than with this kind of doltish dialogue to secure the reopening of an old wound which had almost completely healed over? Learning is indeed in a bad way, if scholars must continue to be quite so foolish! Of Lefèvre's supporters I as yet neither see nor hear anything. But what of yourself, my good friend? Can the state of learning in the future ever be so unpleasant, with so little way of escape as to make you abandon it? Your natural gifts, your upbringing, the way you prepared yourself for life have made you the one person to face up to any difficulty or unpleasantness or complication arising in the field of scholarship, and to endure it and swallow it readily with your eyes on the general benefit of learning. The pamphlet on Pope Julius and his exclusion from heaven is read by everyone everywhere, and somehow few condemn it, although you indeed have good reason to be indignant with the author, who makes the humanities at this moment unpopular if they never were before.

But, dear Erasmus, what am I to make of this? Do you tell me not to answer your letters, because, you say, you will soon be returning here, unless business requires you to go off to Italy? Suppose business does require this, what opportunity will there be, pray, to converse with you by correspondence, when meeting will be impossible? Who will be such a trustworthy courier? And suppose you do come straight back, what do I lose by writing? For I know that, however busy you are, over your dinner perhaps you will steal enough time to read this letter, foolish and unpolished

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37 ill health] See Ep 847:7n.
39 Pucci] See Ep 860 introduction.
41 Cologne] Cf below lines 91–3; Epp 821:19n, 849:22n.
44 *Lamentationes*] The *Lamentationes obscurorum virorum*, an attack upon the Reuchlinists; see Ep 622 introduction.
45 dialogue] Probably Benigno's *Defensio Reuchlini*; see Ep 680:28.
47 Lefèvre's] See Ep 721 introduction.
54 Julius] Cf Ep 849:31–4.
60 Italy] See Ep 770 introduction.

as it is. As for the Englishmen, I promise that I will see to it. I gave your greetings with the greatest care to that venerable figure Doctor Atensis, as you told me to. Believe me, Erasmus, he jumped for joy at the sound of your name, and after a long speech about you which was also extremely complimentary, he told me to greet you in return with all possible warmth and tell you you can rely on him for anything.

The death of our most honoured lord the chancellor of Burgundy has, I know, been reported to you by others, so that I need not arouse your grief once again. Public instruction in the ancient tongues would be making good progress here, if only stipends were paid and the teaching were free; but in any case you know the temperament of the Louvain people, and how much they dislike paying. This vexes our Matthaeus, a man who has such a passionate aversion to money that he does not offer hospitality even for one night, although he busies himself very little with coin. Your friend (ours, rather) Borssele, who is a good sort, an honest open-hearted man, has abandoned us, being nominated dean of Veere. The duty he had undertaken of teaching Latin has been committed to Baerland. There was in your part of the world not long ago a young man from Metz with a passion for sound learning, a candidate in civil and canon law and a very great friend of mine, whose name is Claudius Cantiuncula, who paid you his respects, I do not doubt, if he was there at the same time that you were. I intended to write to him, but when I asked your man Jacobus whether he knew him, he said he did not. Should he happen to be with you, pray give him my warmest

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67 Atensis] Jan Briart of Ath. A cautious approach was indicated; see Ep 843:538n.

72 death] Le Sauvage died at Saragossa, 7 June 1518.

74 ancient tongues] In the Collegium Trilingue (cf Ep 691 introduction). Regular courses, free of charge, began on 1 September 1518; cf de Vocht CTL I 294–5.

77 Matthaeus] Adrianus, the professor of Hebrew; cf Ep 686:7n.

80 Borssele] Cf Ep 849:7n.

82 Baerland] Adriaan Cornelissen van Baerland (cf Ep 492 introduction) was the first professor of Latin at the Collegium Trilingue, but he was not happy with his position (cf Ep 884) and amid increasing difficulties resigned after a year; cf Ep 1046.

85 Cantiuncula] Claude Chansonnette of Metz (1490–1549), known as Cantiuncula, had met Dorp during his years as a student in Louvain, 1512–17 (cf BRE Ep 121). In the latter year he matriculated at Basel. Since Dorp refers to him as a candidate he may have been requesting references or documents in support of his application to Basel. In the autumn of 1518 he was appointed to the Basel chair of civil law and in March 1519 he obtained a legal doctorate; cf G. Kisch *Claudius Cantiuncula* (Basel 1970) 26.

greetings, and tell him further that the whole matter about which he wrote to me over and over again is now safe in shallow water, as the saying goes, so that he need not worry any more. The thing you had written to me about from Cologne (for which I am most grateful) is slowly coming right, and indeed I hope that it will go as you wish.

There is nothing else known to me here that is worth writing about, for I do not doubt that your friends will have written to you fully about their own affairs and anything else that concerns us here. In any case, my dearest Erasmus, since I cannot apply the rule, which you stated with such perfect truth in your letter, that friendship is more enjoyable when it is also shared by many people, pray see to it, I beg you by your guardian genius, that I somehow become known to those eminent literary figures, not that I am keen on my own reputation, but to show them that by their own merit and scholarship they have deserved to be universally beloved. What is more, dearest Erasmus, while we all yield to you in everything, here is one thing I will never concede – that you should outrun me in the race of friendship. I realize from experience the perfect truth of what you said long ago, that men have much to gain from growth and time and knowledge of affairs. What I used to admire now fills me with regret and shame. Mind you take great care of your health, which is so subject to attacks of illness. And then make sure that the illness does not get worse or recur, so that you may long be fit for all your labours (I would compare them to a great rock or a treadmill, were not the labour so honourable and so glorious). If you set off for Italy, you must take greater care of your health there than anywhere, and please look after it, not merely for your own sake but for the whole of Christendom. If only you were to make an early return to us; it will indeed be a red-letter day that sees you back in Louvain.

Dear me, I had almost forgotten something by no means to be overlooked: please give my warmest greetings to Froben the prince of all printers (if our Dirk will not mind my saying so); for all we who are fond of books owe him no common debt. May the Lord God grant him many years of life and happiness, that he may be equal to his most honourable calling, in which to my thinking he has left Aldus himself far behind. What has he printed that is not distinguished for its scholarship, and so well finished too! Farewell, Erasmus, my phoenix among scholars!

Louvain, 14 July 1518

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90 shallow water] Cf *Adagia* I i 45.
110 great rock] Cf *Adagia* II iv 40.
121 Aldus] The famous Venetian printer Aldo Manuzio; cf Ep 207 introduction.

853 / To Jean Le Sauvage Basel, 15 July 1518

This is an additional preface for a new edition of the *Institutio principis christiani* (Basel: Froben July 1518), originally written for the young Prince Charles and dedicated to him (cf lines 68–9, Ep 393). The text had been revised by Erasmus at Froben's request (cf Ep 801:16–19). Since it is unlikely that the news of the chancellor's death had not reached Basel by 15 July (cf Ep 852:72–3) one may assume that the letter was post-dated so as to agree with the expected date of publication. The date is given in Latin as 'Ides of July.' Such tentative dates as 'Calends' or 'Ides' occur frequently in contemporary prefaces (cf Epp 710, 799, 909, 1010). Indeed, the printing may have been well advanced when Erasmus and his friends learnt simultaneously about Le Sauvage's death and the arrival in the Netherlands of Prince Ferdinand. As it was too late to change the whole dedicatory epistle Erasmus hastened to add the last paragraph, suggesting that the edition was really undertaken for Ferdinand's benefit. On the printed page the corresponding lines are slightly indented. The first and third paragraphs are taken, almost without change, from Ep 793, the letter actually sent to Le Sauvage.

In 1524 Erasmus was evidently referring to this letter when he mentioned a 'preface to Ferdinand ... added to my book on the Prince,' which was often omitted in reprints of the *Institutio*; cf Allen I 39.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JEAN LE SAUVAGE, LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF HIS CATHOLIC MAJESTY KING CHARLES, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, LEAST AMONG THE SAME KING'S COUNCILLORS, GREETING

From time to time your chaplain Pierre Barbier, who plays Pylades to my Orestes, castigates me with the kind of letter that might pick a quarrel, because after refusing to take part in your Spanish journey I do not at least pay my respects to your Highness in the way of frequent letters. If I were persuaded that a man of your wisdom either felt the need of a letter or gauged the loyalty of your supporters by trivial tributes of the kind, I should in this matter refuse to take refuge in any excuse, however just, although I can say with perfect truth that hitherto I have been as heavily burdened by my literary labours as you are by the business of so great a prince and of more than one kingdom. That your burden is more glorious I would not deny, but heavier I cannot think it, if for a moment I may compare the elephant and the

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853

5 Pylades] Cf Ep 846:21n.

7 take part] Cf Ep 596 introduction.

gnat. As it is, I know you are cast in a heroic, superhuman mould, and yet there is but one of you, and you are assailed on every side by the great pressure of affairs; and so I think there could be no better way of showing myself truly dutiful than to forgo the duty of paying my respects. In fact, I should feel I was doing wrong in every way – both to his Catholic Majesty, to whom you stand as Hercules did to Atlas, or (if you prefer) he is Hercules and you are his Theseus, and to the whole dominions of that mighty prince, the prosperity of which you seem sent by the kindness of heaven to promote – were I to interrupt you often with a letter, especially as it would convey no business but my humble duty. And this devotion I would gladly prove by more solid evidence, were my powers of mind equal to my zeal; by Christ's help, prove it I will, some day, if the powers above graciously grant me a few more years of life and health.

But now I must grind on for some months more at the treadmill to which I have consigned myself; I made the bed, and I must lie on it; though all the time I am employed much as your Highness is, with equal effort, though with unequal success and far from equal glory. You act with universal applause to a packed audience from the whole world; you guide the affairs of a prince on whose genius, more than on aught else, the sum of human affairs seems to depend and guide them in such a way that between you there might seem to be a kind of noble competition: does he show more integrity as he holds supreme dominion all by himself over so many kingdoms, or you as you fulfil the highest office in the state, servant and master alike without parallel? I on the other hand, shut up and silent among my books, do all I can to promote the cause of the most liberal studies, doing the prince's business also, in a way, as much as you; for I know that nothing is so near his heart as that, under his auspices, Christian piety and scholarship worthy of Christians should blossom more and more among us and be spread far and wide. And yet dominion may perhaps be spread by force of arms; the spreading of true religion needs other forces, other weapons. In this field, which I think even more important than the other, I may be no general, but I do my duty as a private soldier and never shall I regret it, if I have to fight to the end. Only I pray that Christ almighty may give his blessing to the common efforts of us both. And so he will, if we in all sincerity promote his interests and not ours; and in no way shall we better promote our own than by promoting his.

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16 gnat] Cf *Adagia* III i 27.

21 Hercules] Cf Ep 793:14n.

30 made the bed] Literally 'I have pounded the herbs and must eat the results'; cf *Adagia* I i 85.

Buffeted as I am by ill health and by the onslaughts of malicious critics, I live in spirit more than body.

In any case, I count myself happy, and I render thanks to Christ our Saviour at the news which I learn in a letter from my friends, that amid the stormy seas of anxiety and peril which otherwise a heart of steel could scarcely confront, your Highness has enjoyed unbroken good health, whether it is some rare felicity of nature that gives you this strength beyond your years, or you derive it from outstanding devotion to your great prince and to your country, or it is a gift made to you for the prince's sake, and through you to us all, by the kind providence of a heavenly power that wishes to help the human race. As I look upon your active old age, equal to such a burden of affairs, I always seem to see a Massinissa or a Cato, except that you are their equal in endurance and surpass them in wisdom and toleration. If only we might be blessed with many such, we might hope soon to see the Christian world blossom with liberal studies, high standards of conduct, and all the joys of peace.

I hear the illustrious Prince Ferdinand has arrived here safely. I have resumed work for his benefit on a book on the education of a prince, seeing that it has long been unnecessary for Charles, thanks partly to the natural gifts which anticipate in him all the qualities needed in a great monarch, and partly to your intelligent and loyal counsels. Farewell.

Basel, 15 July 1518

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854 / From Ambrogio Leoni

Venice, 19 July 1518

This letter was answered by Ep 868 and published in the *Farrago*. Ambrogio Leoni of Nola (d c 1525) taught medicine at Naples before studying Greek. From 1507 he lived in Venice and belonged to Aldus' circle both as a physician and as a translator of Greek works.

AMBROGIO LEONI OF NOLA, PHYSICIAN, TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Hitherto, dearest Erasmus, I have regarded as fabulous the ancient accounts of Pythagoras and Proteus, one of them returning often to this life-giving air

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51 ill health] Cf Ep 847:7n.
62 Massinissa or a Cato] Cf Ep 793:29n.
67 Ferdinand] Younger brother of King Charles; see Ep 917 introduction.

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4 Pythagoras] Of Samos, sixth century BC. He taught the transmigration of souls, and his own successive reincarnations (as a peacock, the Homeric hero

and each time dying afresh, the other changing himself into various shapes whenever he pleased; for you know there was not much difference in the behaviour of the two. But now I no longer smile at such tales as trumpery or fables; I believe them to be history, for I know that we are blest with both of them in your sole person. In such a short space of time you have often died and returned to life, and no less often changed your shape for something new and different. First I heard, actually from Aldus, that you had died in France and a few years later come to life again in Germany. Then it was reported that your loss was mourned in Germany, and soon afterwards you reappeared in Italy. Lastly I was given to understand that you had met your end in England and have now retraced your steps from Avernus and appeared in France, whence you have written to me and to fellow-countrymen of mine and made us all feel much better. So I thought I must be seeing a second Pythagoras. Besides that, you not only changed from an Italian to a Frenchman and from a Frenchman into a German (like the change from a calf into a bird and from a bird into a kind of breadcorn, for which they wrongly read *semen* in the text of Pliny) but you have turned from a poet into a theologian and effected a transmigration from theologian to Cynic philosopher, and then finally exchanged the Cynic for an orator – marvellous metamorphoses, which we thought the property of Proteus and no one else. For I have seen numberless books of yours in print, in which you have rung the changes on the different personalities or characters of which I speak and have won praise and admiration from a large circle of readers, who moreover all speak constantly of you and of what you say, not as

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Euphorbus, Homer himself, etc) were celebrated (eg, Persius 6.11).

4 Proteus] The old man of the sea who can turn himself into any shape; cf *Adagia* II ii 74.

9 often died] For various rumours of Erasmus' death see Epp 194:11–15, 270 introduction, 479:4–5, 948:63–4, 950:32–3, 1008, 1142.

15 Avernus] A volcanic lake in Campania, supposedly an entrance to the Nether regions; Virgil *Aeneid* 6.126 and 128

21 Pliny] The play on words cannot be translated. *Italus*, an Italian, was derived by Varro from a Greek word *italos* meaning 'calf' *(vitulus)* (Aulus Gellius 11.1.1); *Gallus* means a Gaul (Frenchman), *gallus* a cock; Pliny (*Historia naturalis* 18.82 and 198) gives to a 'kind of grain' (spelt) the name 'seed' (*semen*), for which Leoni appears to write *germen* ('grain') in order to recall 'German.'

22 Cynic philosopher] The Cynics or 'dog' philosophers, so called after the nickname of Diogenes of Sinope (fifth century BC), were represented both in Greece and in ancient Rome, but they did not constitute a proper school of philosophy and were on the whole too individualistic to hold a common set of basic precepts. It is therefore difficult to know what Leoni wished to imply by using the term here.

though you were one individual who produced these important opinions, but as if they had three or four different authors.

What is more, those transformations of yours have done something else for me. Long ago, I used to laugh at Pythagoras, who when born again used to recognize and refer to the fact that he had lived in another epoch; for Aristotle had proved that in death no memory remains of what had happened earlier during life. But now, when I see you have died so often and returned to the light of the sun without forgetting me and my friends and with your memory intact, I turn up my nose at Aristotle, whose diligence has led him astray. But though it may be like that, dear Erasmus, I have my fears, even though you may have enjoyed your changes, that they may turn out otherwise than what you intended and what happened in earlier transformations. I should like therefore to urge you to restrain your ambitions within the kind of life you lead at the moment, maintain the status quo by every means in your power, and incur no risk of further change for fear you may suffer what often happens to divers who, after frequently re-emerging from the water into which they have plunged so boldly, sometimes swim confidently under the water and then are never seen to come up anywhere. Remember your own adage: Not without reason to Abydos sail; for I know no change more fraught with danger than the changes from life to death and from one shape to another.

Here however I have no news to send you that you might care to hear. Apart from what goes on in the literary way there is nothing that seems appropriate to you; and literature itself is sadly neglected everywhere and shivering as though at death's door. For great rumblings of Turkish arms are heard in Italy, which take their rise in Egypt, Syria, and Persia; and this terrifies the poor Muses, who as you know are poor virgins and but ill clad; they see death staring them in the face, and with them all literary activity must inevitably die out too. Still, I must think of something to say. You are to know that it has been resolved in the Venetian senate, and even published

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34 Aristotle] Memory to him is an affection, in part at least physical, hence not separable from the body; therefore the essay De *memoria et reminiscentia* is included in the *Parva naturalia.*

47 adage] *Adagia* I vii 93. To sail up the Dardanelles against the current, past Abydos at their narrowest part, was proverbially hard work.

54 Egypt, Syria, and Persia] The Ottoman sultan Selim I conquered Syria and Egypt between August 1516 and April 1517. For frequent diplomatic contacts between Shah Ismail and Venice before and after the Turkish victory against Persia in August 1514 see E. von Palombini *Bündniswerben abendländischer Mächte um Persien* (Wiesbaden 1968) 45–60.

by the town crier, that a successor is to be chosen to Marcus Musurus, to give public lectures in Greek; and the stipend has been fixed at one hundred gold pieces. This has attracted a large field of competitors; for a two-month period has been prescribed, in which candidates are to give in their names and to demonstrate by publicly going through and expounding Greek authors what manner of men they are, and whether tongue and brain are any good. Should there be anyone therefore under those skies of yours who has a reputation and some knowledge of Greek, pray inform him personally of this decision, so that if it appeals to him to be a competitor and to expound Greek texts, he may arrive here within the space of two months. You know moreover that great crowd of listeners that used to cheep like chicks while Musurus clucked over them. Not a few of these have now turned out good big pullets; no more cheeping, they chirrup and cackle and have high hopes of actually mounting their master's rostrum. Among the more polished performers is one Pietro Alcionio, who has made a number of highly polished translations from Greek into Latin. He has reproduced several orations of Isocrates and Demosthenes in such pure Ciceronian style that you might think you were reading our Arpinate himself, and has turned many of Aristotle's pieces so lucidly that Latium could proudly say 'Lo Aristotle now belongs to us.' This same young man, as a devoted student of the best literature in both languages, is also very much attached to you and a very great admirer of your researches.

In conclusion you shall hear something of myself, who am now an old man as well as an old friend. I have lived since you left us in the way in which I lived while you were here, which you well know, steadily mumbling away over books in both languages, with the idea of producing in my old age something worthy of my Lion name; not like some woman who while only a slip of a girl wants to find herself in a family way at the earliest moment and is delighted to become a mother in no time at all, for the children of such are

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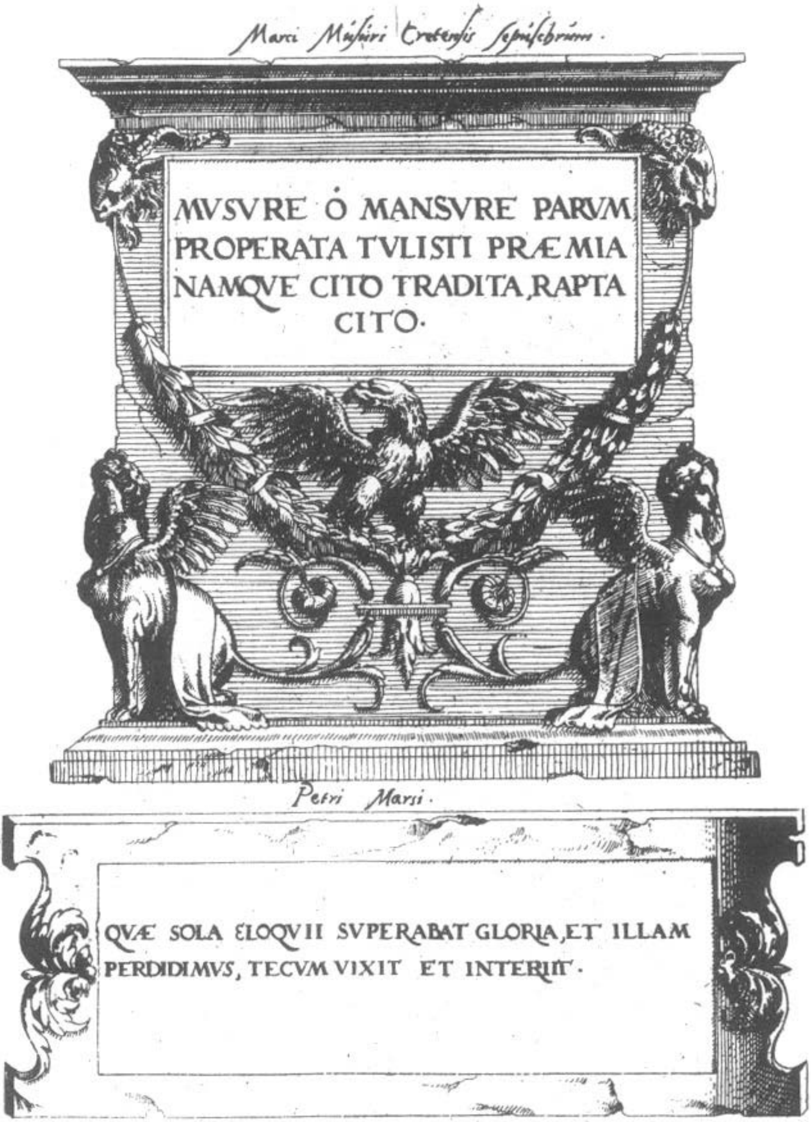
59 successor ... to Marcus Musurus] Erasmus had already been encouraged to apply in June 1517 (cf Ep 589:18–31). For Musurus see Ep 574 introduction.

60 one hundred gold pieces] Undoubtedly Venetian ducats. If so, a stipend then worth £33 6s 6d gros Flemish = £207 10s 0d tournois = £22 18s 4d sterling. Cf CWE 1 314, 338. For the stipend cf Ep 836:8n. Leoni is referring to a motion passed by the Venetian senate in June 1518. In the end Vettore Fausto was appointed; cf J.B. Ross in *Renaissance Quarterly* 29 (1976) 544–5.

73 Alcionio] The only translations of his known to have been published were a collection of writings of Aristotle (Venice: B. de' Vitali April 1521), but his continued interest in rhetorical texts is attested to by his public lectures on Demosthenes in 1526–7; see Ep 450:29n; DBI.

76 Arpinate] Arpinum was the birthplace of Cicero.


Marci Musuri Cretensis sepulchrum.
MVSVRE O MANSVRE PARVM PROPERATA TVLISTI PRÆMIA NAMQVE CITO TRADITA,RAPTA CITO·
Petri Marsi.
QVÆ SOLA ELOQVII SVPERABAT GLORIA,ET ILLAM PERDIDIMVS, TECVM VIXIT ET INTERIIT·
Romae.

Tomb of Marcus Musurus
Tobias Fendt *Monumenta sepulcrorum* (Breslau:
C. Scharffenberg 1574) fol 26
Reproduced by permission of the
Huntington Library, San Marino, California

weaklings from birth and cannot long survive. I have conceived several books, some of which I bring to birth shortly; others are born now and published. I have composed a modest work in three books on my native city of Nola, which has been printed, and have also compiled a large work divided into forty-six books, an attack on Averroes based on Peripatetic principles, which is likewise in print; so you can see that I too have not been wasting my nights on a pile of pillows.

Something in the way of a letter in reply to this, though it comes only from me, would be most welcome; I long to hear from you, not only to know that you are well, as I very greatly hope, but to be told by you some of the things that go on among those who have said farewell to this life, and which region makes the more agreeable place of residence. You really know both, after exchanging life for death and death for life so often. Farewell, and keep a kindness for me, as I know you do.

From Venice, 19 July 1518, from the grocer's at the sign of the Coral

855 / To Paolo Bombace Basel, 26 July 1518

This letter is Erasmus' second answer to Ep 729. In a previous answer from Louvain (Ep 800) he had still expressed the hope of meeting his old friend (Ep 210) in Switzerland, where Bombace was completing a mission as secretary to the papal nuncio, Antonio Pucci. But by the time Erasmus arrived at Basel, Bombace had evidently left for Rome. This second answer was published at once in the *Auctarium* of August 1518. Its principal contents, the praise of Pucci and of the English court and the declaration of peace with Lefèvre, are inserted to gain immediate publicity.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND
PAOLO BOMBACE, GREETING

I cannot agree: what more suitable destination for the warlike Bombace, that

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88 weaklings from birth] Cf Aristotle *De generatione animalium* 767b.

89 shortly] In 1519 he published his translation of Actuarius *De urinis* (Venice: B. de' Vitali); cf also Ep 868:35n.

90 modest work] *De Nola patria* (Venice: J. Rubeus 4 September 1517)

91 large work] *Castigationes in Averroem* (Venice: B. and M. de' Vitali 25 September 1517). Averroes (ibn-Rushd) of Cordoba was a highly controversial twelfth-century philosopher, particularly influential in the West.

102 Coral] Cf Ep 450:28.

855

3 warlike] Cf Ep 251:16–24.

doughty warrior, as Homer loves to say, than the Helvetii? Nor had you any reason to fear the frostbite there, like poor Trebatius among the ancient Britons, seeing how those ubiquitous stoves of theirs make one sweat even in midwinter. I put off an answer to your letter, thinking I should be able to greet you personally either at Rome or in Switzerland. I found the excellent Antonio Pucci, the papal legate, here; he earns one's respect in any case as a highly gifted man, but can have no higher title to my affection than his sincere good will towards you. On arriving in Basel, he at once sent his people to pay his respects, with a pressing invitation to dinner and conversation. Not to put too fine a point on it, he had to entertain my shadows, if I may so call the dear and familiar friends of mine whom he had invited for my sake, especially Beatus and the Amerbachs, who are known to you too. Great man as he is, he had to descend to this treadmill if he wished to make the acquaintance of my noble self.

And why, you may well ask, did that noble self show so much hauteur? Dear Bombace, what made me so uncivil and so distant was not my feelings, but the most accursed ill health. It afflicted me for over a month and after an interval attacked me again so severely that I sent for the doctor, a thing I do not normally do unless I am more or less tired of life; and so persistent is the trouble that it seems destined to finish me off. Pace has returned to us and has paid me his respects in a series of treatises rather than letters; but by bad luck I had no speech with him, for he was soon summoned to England by the king. That you found him congenial, I assure you, does not surprise me: you are birds of a feather. I cannot tell you how popular he is with his own people, especially that very civilized king, and that remarkable man, the cardinal.

You know, my excellent Bombace, how averse I have always been from

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4 Helvetii] Erasmus is probably thinking not only of the warlike reputation of the Swiss but also of the campaigns of Julius Caesar in Gaul. For Erasmus' perception of the Swiss as warriors and mercenaries cf Epp 134, 360, 610:13n, 809:30–2 and especially some highly critical remarks in the adage 'Ut fici' (II viii 65; cf Ep 829:36n) in the 1517–18 edition. These were removed, however, from later editions; cf Ep 858:643n.

5 Trebatius] Cf Ep 800:7n.

9 Pucci] See Ep 860 introduction.

15 Amerbachs] For the brothers Bruno, Basilius, and Bonifacius Amerbach cf Epp 331, 408 introductions.

20 ill health] Cf Ep 847:7n.

23 returned to us] After his embassy to the Swiss and Germans; cf Ep 619. For Richard Pace cf Ep 211:5n; for his letters cf Ep 742:1–2.

27 birds of a feather] Cf *Adagia* I ii 22.

29 cardinal] Thomas Wolsey

the courts of princes; it is a life which I can only regard as gilded misery under a mask of splendour; but I would gladly move to a court like that, if I could grow young again. The king is the most intelligent of the monarchs of our time and enjoys good literature. The queen is astonishingly well read, far beyond what would be surprising in a woman, and as admirable for piety as she is for learning. The men who have most influence with them are those who excel in the humanities and in integrity and wisdom. Thomas Linacre is the physician; it would be a waste of time to praise him to you, for he displays his quality in his published works. Cuthbert Tunstall is his 'Master of the Rolls,' an office which they regard as of the highest standing. You would hardly believe, my dear Paolo, what a world of all good things is embraced in the mention of that man's name. Thomas More is of the privy council, not only the Muses' darling but the pattern of all charm and of every grace, whose ability you have been able to discern to some extent in what he has written. Pace, almost a brother to him, is secretary. William Mountjoy is head of her majesty's household. John Colet is a select preacher. I have mentioned only the leaders. Among the chaplains is John Stokesley who, besides this scholastic theology, in which he is second to none, has a more than common skill in the three tongues. This is the kind of man of whom his palace is full, more like an academy than a king's court. What Athens or Stoa or Lyceum could one prefer to a court like that?

Your congratulations about Lefèvre are not more welcome than the confrontation itself was unpleasant. If only he had shown a little more moderation in his attack on me! But things are like that: no man is wise morning, noon, and night. If there is anything wrong in this, I like to think it is my destiny that is at fault. For what else could I do? Lefèvre is an upright

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32 a mask] Seneca *Letters* 80.8

32 court like that] The following praise is a strong indication that Erasmus was seriously considering a move to England in the near future; cf Ep 834 introduction.

34 queen] Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536). For the remarkable humanistic education of Henry VIII's first queen cf G. Mattingly *Catherine of Aragon* (London 1942) 16–17.

37 Linacre] See Ep 118:27n.

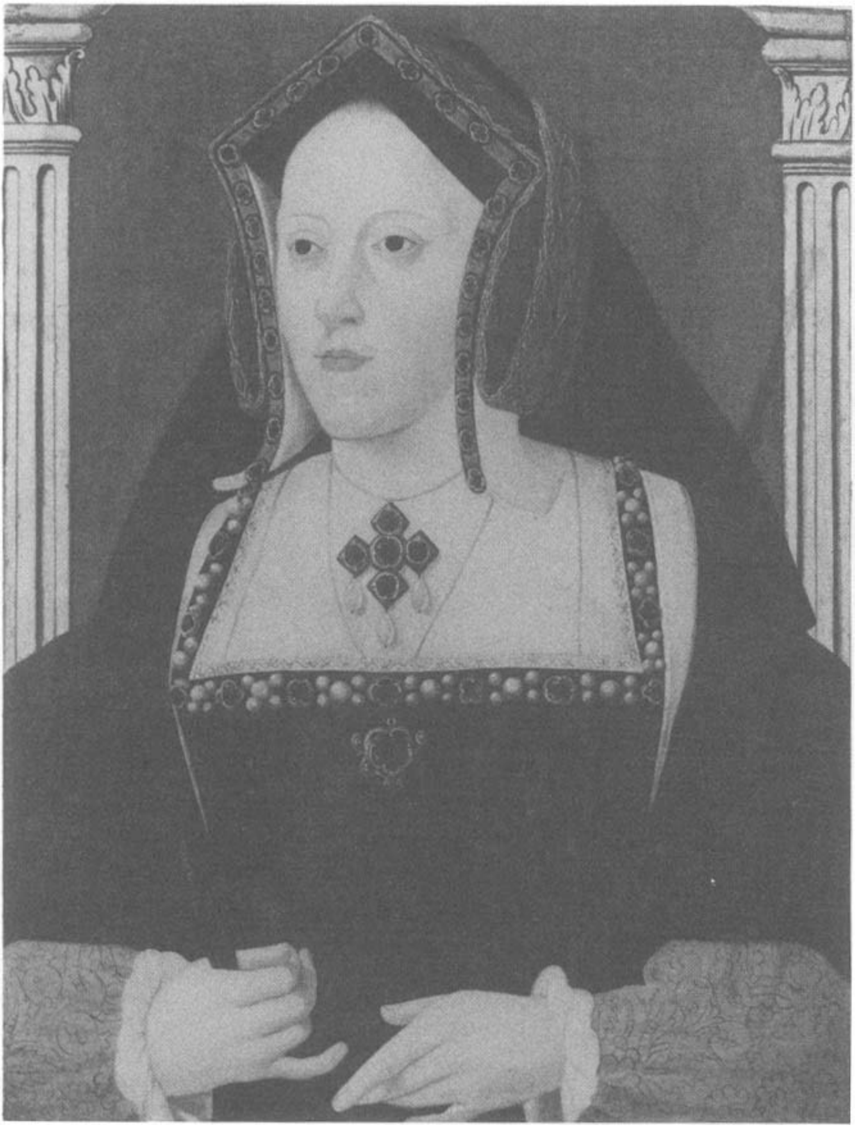
42 of the privy council] See Ep 829:6n.

45 Mountjoy ... Colet] See Epp 79, 106 introductions.

47 Stokesley] John Stokesley (1475–1539). After extensive studies in Oxford and Italy, he became chaplain and almoner to Henry VIII and later bishop of London.

52 not more welcome] Reading *magis gratum* for the *magis ingratum* of the first edition

54 wise] Cf *Adagia* II iv 29.



Catherine of Aragon
Artist unknown
National Portrait Gallery, London

man, learned, kind-hearted, last but not least an old friend of mine. Some evil spirit, I suppose, grudged me that felicity; and now my attitude towards him is such that it will be extremely painful to me if anyone thinks worse of Lefèvre because of me. Certain people I could name, who enjoy this kind of vendetta, spread rumours of a quarrel between us. But he and I are of one mind, and we shall give no grounds for thinking that a single shadow of disagreement has ended a true friendship of such long standing. If there was contention between Barnabas and Paul, what wonder if some human feeling of the kind arose between us? How important scholars in your part of the world think my works are, I do not know; here they certainly attach to them an importance I cannot accept. And yet there are people who bark at them loudly, such people for the most part as either read nothing I write or would waste their time if they read it, good or bad. If the honest opinion of so many excellent men did not support me, I should long ago have repented of all the midnight oil I have expended on promoting to the best of my ability the common cause of scholarship, and particularly of sacred study.

These widespread rumours about the Turks are suspected by most people, who have so often discovered before now that while the oarsmen face one way the boat goes the other, and that nowhere was there more truth in the old saying 'In war what's new is mostly untrue.' But whatever is going on in those parts, I pray it may turn out for the general good; for a great change in human affairs is under way, and there must be danger in it. Your news of Marcus Musurus and Paleotti is distressing; and all the time the man by the entrance will outlive the whole tribe of crows. But all this is, as the Greek says, on the knees of the gods. Fausto has died in France, and in England Andrea Ammonio, one of whom long held court in Paris, and the other would have reached the highest positions had he been granted a longer life. Mind that for your part you look after your health.

Basel, 26 July 1518

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61 of one mind] Cf Ep 721 introduction.
64 contention] Cf Acts 15:39.
73 Turks] Cf Epp 729:56n, 854:53–5.
76 old saying] Cf *Adagia* II x 19.
79 Musurus and Paleotti] Bombace had reported the deaths of Musurus and Camillo Paleotti; see Ep 729:60n, 61n.
79 man by the entrance] Erasmus uses a Greek phrase, the meaning of which we do not know.
80 crows] The crow was famous for longevity; *Adagia* I vi 64.
81 Fausto] Andrelini; see Ep 810:489n.
82 Ammonio] See Ep 623.

856 / To Willibald Pirckheimer Basel, [July–August] 1518

This letter answers Ep 747, which dealt mostly with the controversy around Johann Reuchlin. It was not selected to appear in the *Auctarium* but was included in the *Farrago* (cf Ep 861 introduction). Pirckheimer, the Nürnberg patrician and scholar (cf Ep 318 introduction), did not see it until it was printed; cf Ep 1095.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND WILLIBALD, GREETING

I do not know whose fault it was that that longish letter of yours took such a time to reach me. It made clear to me that my friend Willibald, whom I knew already for a civilized and upright man and a good scholar, is also endowed with exceptional wisdom and a nobility of spirit proper to a man of no plebeian sort. You speak of princes: my fortune would be made, did I not find freedom too sweet. Anything that costs a loss of freedom seems to me too dearly bought. Now that I have learnt to be content with my present modest lot, I shall remain unmoved, whether they give me something or nothing. I only wish I were not even less well endowed with the true wealth you think me so rich in. Your account of what you have done I find entirely convincing. It is typical of your courtesy that you seem actually to thank me for my criticism, which was as bold as it was badly timed.

When I think over the riots and the cabals that these men make, my dear Willibald, I sometimes wonder what they are aiming at; sometimes I am indignant, sometimes sorry for their blindness and their folly. Astrologers tell us that some plagues both of mind and body are inflicted by the stars; poets say, by the infernal powers; Homer puts the blame for turmoil of this sort on Ate; some authors attribute something of the kind to the god Pan. Whatever its source, this plague is a major disaster. I do not choose to think of that circumcised fellow; even to mention him I regard as an evil omen. What came into Gratius' head, that he should be willing to prostitute his literary skill, such as it is, to the folly, or more truly the ambition, of certain individuals, though he seems endowed with gifts which, coupled with serious work and sound judgment, might have given him a place among stylists and men of letters? As it is, the only feat he is known for is his abuse of Reuchlin and his friends, and his having apparently lent the aid of a hack

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856

18 Homer] *Iliad* 19.91

19 Pan] Cf *Adagia* III vii 3.

21 circumcised fellow] Johann Pfefferkorn; cf 485:22n, 694 introduction.

22 Gratius] For Ortwinus Gratius see Epp 622 introduction, 821:19n.

scribbler, writing for his bread, to spiteful men who cannot write. Many times it has entered my mind to warn the reverend father Jacob of Hoogstraten against putting the labour of so many years behind this quarrelsome business and doing himself so much harm in the eyes of the learned world by what he publishes. As I read his pamphlets, I often say to myself 'I wish you could see yourself with my eyes!' But he and I are not really intimate, so that neither knows the other very well. And I know from experience that a rather outspoken warning is not always successful even among friends. And so I was afraid that if I took too much thought for his reputation I might fall under the suspicion of doing Reuchlin's business for him; he and I are indeed friends, but from anything to do with his case I am as far as possible.

Some say that Hoogstraten's character is not wholly uncivilized; others tell a different story. Personally I always prefer to believe those who speak well of a man rather than ill. But to confess the truth quite frankly, when I skimmed through the man's pamphlets, I was forced to think less well of him than before – forced by the facts. He has some hangers-on to provide the applause, to cool his brow with cold water, to shout 'Bravo!' and their valuation, their adulation rather, gives him his clue to the whole world's opinion. He had supporters here too, but of the sort to act in secret and by trickery; though they have lately begun to put a bold front on it and betray the disease of the mind they have concealed so long. Nor am I yet on the scent of what disturbs them so, except that they are convinced, I feel, in their idiot way that if the humanities begin to flourish everywhere, as they now do, this will seriously weaken the authority of those who, beyond this modern teaching of theirs, have learnt nothing and have nothing to look forward to. We ourselves are in part the cause of this evil: we attack their work more bitterly than we should and cry up our own subjects to a pitch which they are bound to resent; we choose to imitate their bad points instead of surpassing them by our good ones, and we spend more time thinking how their chicanery deserves to be treated than how we ourselves ought to behave. I myself in several contexts touch on imperfect theologians who are unworthy of the name, but of a sort that I supposed not to exist among us. I have experienced behaviour in certain persons that I could not have credited

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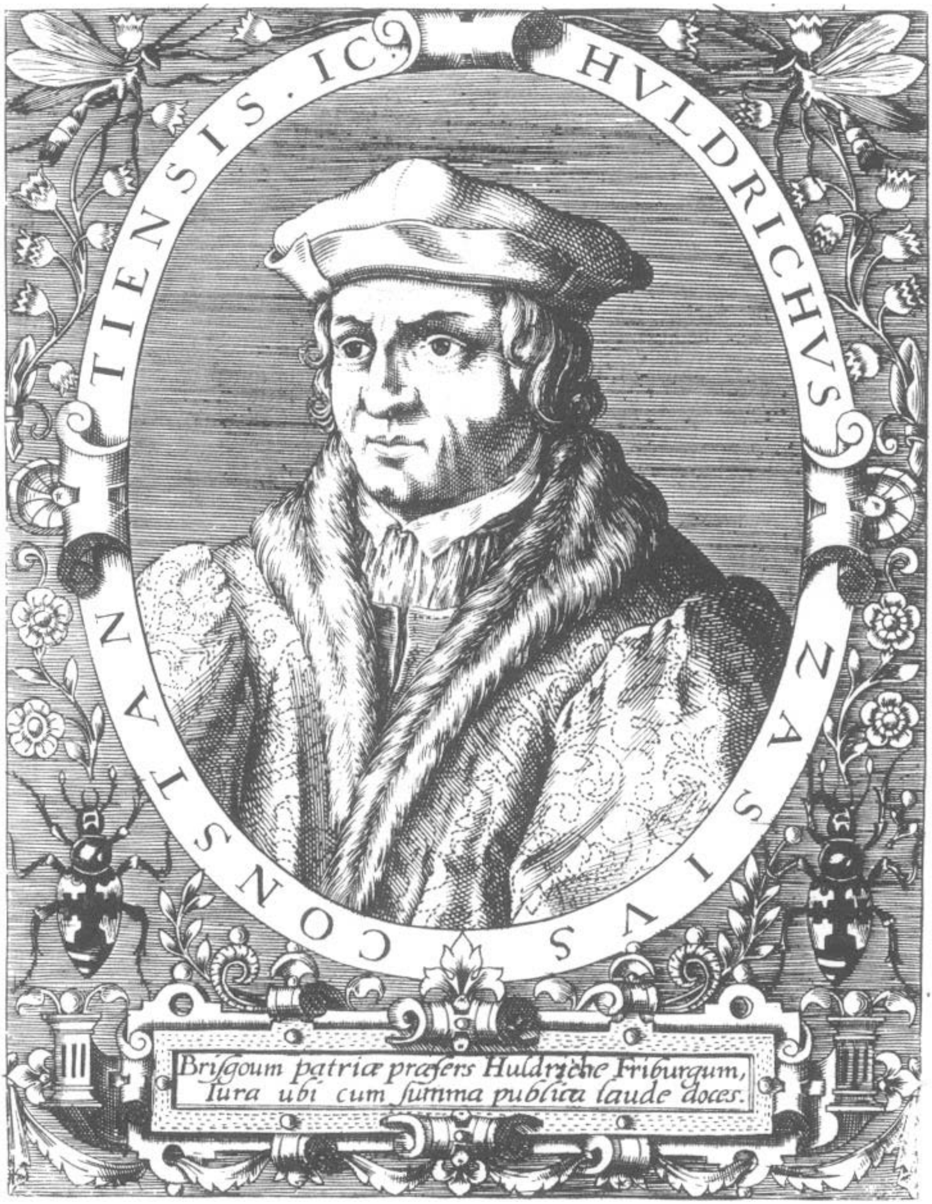
32 his pamphlets] Cf Epp 680:28n, 849:21–30. The following remarks provide an important clue to the existence of direct relations between Erasmus and Hoogstraten; cf Ep 1006 introduction; Allen Ep 1342:614–15.

47 here too] Erasmus is clearly thinking of Louvain and the opposition to the Collegium Trilingue; cf Epp 670, 691 introductions, and for Lee's criticism of Reuchlin Ep 898A introduction.

48 bold front] cf *Adagia* I viii 47.


HVLDRICHVS ZASIVS CONSTANTIENSIS. IC.
Briſgoum patriæ præfers Huldriche Friburgum,
Iura ubi cum ſumma publica laude doces.

Udalricus Zasius
Engraving by Théodore de Bry,
from J.J. Boissard *Icones virorum illustrium* (Frankfurt 1597)
Öffentliche Bibliothek, University of Basel

anywhere in the world in a brothel-keeper. As I hope for Christ's mercy, this is the truth. In the virulent attacks of malice by which I am buffeted on all sides, my first consolation is a good conscience; my second, the approval of many men who are generally admitted to be of high character, outstanding scholarship, and fine judgment.

My New Testament will shortly appear in a new edition, with a good deal of revision, but somewhat less than I had hoped, owing to the state of my health, by whose capacity we ought always to measure the tasks we take on. That I have fallen into a controversy with Lefèvre grieves me as much as it does you, and that for many reasons, but principally because I was sorry that this business should give so much pleasure to men who from good letters get nothing but pain. But steps are being taken, and there is good hope that this surface wound will soon heal over. I am much attached to Lefèvre and do not think he entirely dislikes me. As for paying you a visit, my excellent Willibald, I only wish my ability to do so matched the warmth of your welcome. Farewell.

Basel, 1518

857 / From Udalricus Zasius Freiburg, 13 August 1518

The best source for this letter is a manuscript copy taken by Bonifacius Amerbach (line 35), who was at this time Zasius' student in Freiburg but had returned to Basel for the summer vacation (Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel, MS C VIa 35 ii f19 recto). From a contemporary letter (AK II Ep 622) we learn that Amerbach was then collecting the correspondence between Erasmus and Zasius. His collection includes copies of Epp 358 and 376 and the original autographs of Epp 366, 379, and 859.

There is also a copy of this letter in the Deventer Letter-book, the first one to be entered by Johannes Hovius (see Ep 867:189n; Allen I 605–6). Allen prints a facsimile opposite Ep 857.

It appears that Zasius, a distinguished legal scholar (cf Ep 303 introduction), had recently gone to Basel for his first personal visit with Erasmus; this letter presents his reactions. It was answered by Ep 859, and both were printed in the *Auctarium*.

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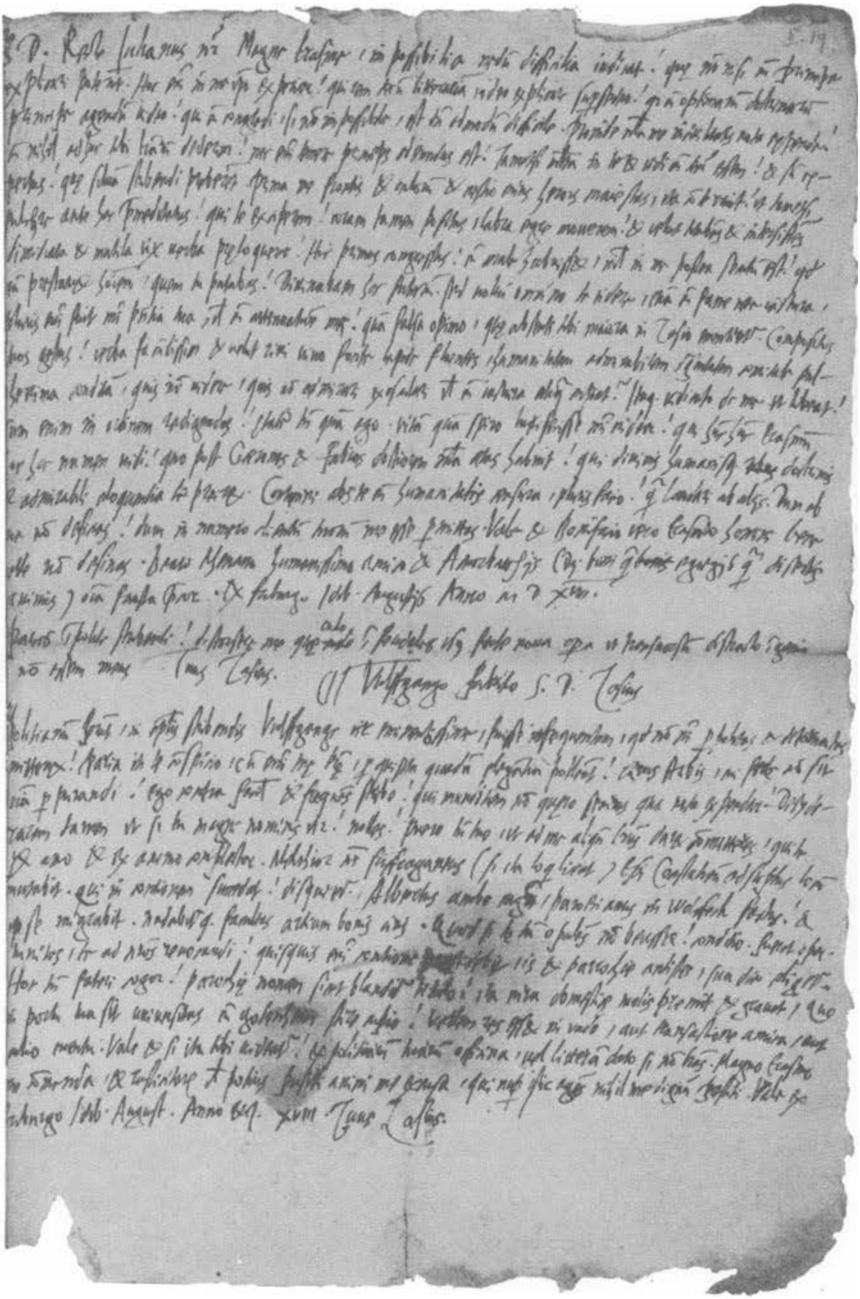
67 New Testament] See Ep 864 introduction.
73 good hope] Cf Epp 721 introduction, 855:60–3.
75 visit] Pirckheimer apparently expected to see Erasmus on his return journey from Basel; cf P. Prachtbectius' letter to Pirckheimer, Freiburg, 5 August 1518, in *Documenta literaria varii argumenti* ed J. Heumann (Altorf 1758) 233.



Letter from Udalricus Zasius to Erasmus, Epistle 857
This is a copy made by Bonifacius Amerbach
Öffentliche Bibliothek, University of Basel, MS C VIA 35 ii fol 19 recto

UDALRICUS ZASIUS, TEACHER OF CIVIL LAW, TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

How right our Julianus is, great Erasmus, when he describes as impossible, not to say merely difficult, questions which it will be impracticable to unravel without the aid of the prince! I find this true in my own case: I forbear to ask your help in the unravelling of literary questions because I see that this must mean consulting the prince of humane studies, and to consort with him is, if not impossible, at least very difficult. And so you must not dismiss me as discourteous if I have not written to you so far. The prince is not to be approached unadvisedly, although I both saw in you when I was with you and have found by experience much that would provide matter for a letter. At first sight the authority in your face and glance, and a certain look of the great man, so frightened me that, though I had given much thought beforehand to my reception of you, when I found myself in your presence I could hardly open my mouth; like a man who totters unsteadily between stops and starts, I could hardly bring out a few broken syllables. After the failure of this first interview, nothing emerged in me later that could make me look like the man you thought I was.

I guessed that this would happen, but I wanted to see you at all costs, even if my reputation must suffer for it. I set a higher value on meeting you in person, even if it meant some loss of face, than on the misleading reports which gave you a false idea of greater things in your Zasius when you were at a distance. Your measured movements, your easy flow of words like some delightful stream that runs from a fresh spring, your wonderful kindliness, your air of authority graced with a beautiful courtesy – who would not wish to see and wonder at and enjoy all this, even if it cost him something? Pass on me then such judgment as you please, for I am only fit to be put in my place. Yet I shall feel that I have made good use of the life I live, the air I breathe, for I have seen Erasmus my great patron deity; and since the days of Cicero and Quintilian no age has known a greater scholar or one who could surpass you in divine and human learning and great gifts of style. Your disapproval, with the verdict of your kindly nature, means more to me than praise from other people, provided you do not abandon me, provided you suffer me to remain among your dependents. Farewell, and do not abate your good will towards

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857

3 Julianus] Salvius Julianus, a leading Roman jurist of the second century AD and a quaestor under the emperor Hadrian, composed a digest in ninety books, which is often quoted in the *Digest* of Justinian. The specific reference has not been traced.

9 so far] Since their recent meeting

that true disciple of Erasmus, Bonifacius. My very best wishes to my kindest of friends Beatus Rhenanus, and to the Amerbachs – heavens, what excellent, what gifted characters!

Freiburg, 13 August 1518

Forgive my unpolished writing; I was distracted by what I have in hand on feudal uses, which as it happens breaks new ground, so that, my mind being driven all astray, I was not my own master.

Your sincere friend Zasius

858 / To Paul Volz Basel, 14 August 1518

This is the preface to a new edition of the *Enchiridion militis christiani* (cf Ep 164), printed by Froben in July (–August) 1518 (cf line 635n). Erasmus dispatched the revised text in February or March 1518, and Froben promised to publish it at once (cf Ep 801). The letter was reprinted in subsequent editions of the *Enchiridion* and in the *Opus epistolarum* of 1529. While some passages may recall Erasmus' own beginnings (lines 445–53, 476–88, 521–4), it is important as a careful reflection on two matters of great concern at this time, Pope Leo x's crusade (lines 85–165, 401–11) and Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses (line 216n). More than that, it expresses with some coherence Erasmus' view of the social and political order of Christendom (lines 244–394). For a recent and very complete analysis of this letter see G. Chantraine *'Mystère' et 'Philosophie du Christ' selon Erasme* (Namur-Gembloux 1971) 99–153.

The new edition of the *Enchiridion* marks the beginning of a decade in which the work achieved remarkable popularity as the manifesto of Christian humanism, and this preface serves to underline the essential points. In 1523 Erasmus noted that adding this letter cost him the affection of certain Dominicans who had previously praised the *Enchiridion* in public (Allen I 20). Paul Volz (cf Ep 368 introduction) was a Benedictine abbot and member of the Sélestat literary society.

TO THE REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST DOCTOR PAUL VOLZ,
MOST RELIGIOUS ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY
COMMONLY CALLED HUGSHOFEN,
FROM DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

It is true, most worthy Father, that I have begun to be less dissatisfied with the small book entitled *The handy weapon of a Christian knight*, which I wrote

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35 Bonifacius] Amerbach

40 feudal uses] *In usus feudorum epitome* was first published by H. Bebel, Basel 1535.

long ago to please no one but myself and one quite uneducated private friend, now that I see it approved by you and others like you; for being yourselves endowed with pious learning and with learned piety, I know that you would approve of nothing that is not equally pious and learned. But now it almost begins to satisfy me, when I see it so often printed already and still in demand as though it were a novelty – if what the printers tell me is not entirely flattery. But then again I am often made uncomfortable by the pointed comment of a learned friend some time ago, humorously uttered, but I fear with as much truth as it had humour, that holiness of life is more noticeable in the book than in its author. And I find this harder to bear, because the same thing has happened in the man whose improvement was the chief object of my labours: so far is he from tearing himself away from life at court that he is plunged more deeply in it every day. How much piety this shows I do not know, but in any case, as he himself admits, it is a very great misfortune. Yet I am not wholly sorry for my friend, inasmuch as fortune herself may teach him one day to repent, though he has been reluctant to take my advice. But I myself, though I strive always to reach that goal, have been assailed by my evil genius with so many mischances and so many storms that compared with me Homer's Ulysses might be mistaken for another Polycrates.

And yet I cannot altogether regret this work, if it encourages so many people to the pursuit of true piety. Nor yet do I feel myself open to attack from every quarter if I do not live up as I should to my own precepts. For one thing, it is an element of goodness to have a sincere desire to be good, nor do I think that one should reject a heart that is sincerely devoted to such thoughts, although its efforts are sometimes unsuccessful. This must be one's first purpose all one's life long, and repeated attempts will one day succeed. A man who has really learnt the way has a good part of a complicated journey already behind him. I am therefore unmoved by the jeers of some men I could name who despise this small book as unlearned and the kind of thing that any schoolmaster could write, because it handles no Scotistic problems, as though nothing could show true learning without

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858

7 private friend] Johann Poppenruyter; cf Epp 164, 698.

11 so often printed already] At least nine times

21 inasmuch] Reading *quoniam*

25 Ulysses] Ulysses symbolizes restlessness and countless misfortunes; Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, symbolizes unbroken felicity.

38 Scotistic problems] The Franciscan John Duns Scotus (d 1308) probably represents here scholastic philosophy in general; cf Ep 798:24n.

them. Penetration I can do without, provided there is piety. It need not equip men for the wrestling-schools of the Sorbonne if it equips them for the tranquillity proper to a Christian. It need not contribute to theological discussion provided it contributes to the life that befits a theologian. Why deal with the questions that everyone deals with? On what else do our swarms of students spend their time? There are almost as many commentaries on the *Sentences* as you can name theologians. Of makers of summaries there is no end; one cannot count them – mixing this thing and that over and over again, and like the men who sell drugs making old out of new, new out of old, one out of many and many out of one all the time. How can a mass of such volumes ever teach us how to live, when a whole lifetime would not suffice to read them? It is as though a physician were to prescribe for a patient who is acutely ill that he should read right through the works of Jacques Desparts and all the books of others like him, in hopes of finding what will restore him to health. Death will come upon him meanwhile, and he will be past human aid.

Life flies so fast that we must have a present remedy within our reach. Countless are the volumes they fill with their precepts on restitution, confession, vows, scandalous behaviour, and endless other things! And while they discuss everything in the smallest detail and define every point as though they distrusted the intelligence of everyone except themselves and indeed put no faith in Christ's mercy – they lay down precisely what he owes in the way of reward or punishment for every action – yet they never agree among themselves, and sometimes do not even explain the point clearly if you consult them in more detail. So great is the variety in men's natures and circumstances. Furthermore, suppose that they have defined everything truly and correctly, not to mention the tedious and frigid style in which they deal with these questions, how few men have the leisure to read through so many tomes? Who can carry the *Secunda secundae* of Aquinas round with him? And yet the good life is everybody's business, and Christ wished the way to it to be accessible to all men, not beset with impenetrable labyrinths of argument but open to sincere faith, to love unfeigned, and their companion,

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45 *Sentences*] The *Sententiarum libri quattuor* of Peter Lombard, d 1164

45 makers of summaries] Cf Ep 575:34–7.

52 Desparts] Jacques Desparts (or Jacobus a Partibus) of Tournai (d 1458) was a physician, teacher, and canon of Notre Dame in Paris who left an enormous commentary on Avicenna, part of which was published in 1498; see DBF.

67 *Secunda secundae*] The second part of the second book of the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, often published separately as an authoritative manual of ethics

the hope that is not put to shame. Lastly, by all means let eminent rabbins, who must always be scarce, pore over these great tomes; but none the less we must take thought all the time for the unlettered multitude, for whom Christ died. He has already taught people the leading part of the Christian religion, who has fired them with the love of it. That wise king, bringing up his son to true wisdom, takes not a little more pains in encouraging than in teaching him, as though to love wisdom were already close to having acquired it. It is a disgrace to do this in the eyes of lawyers and physicians, two kinds of men who have deliberately made their art as difficult as they can, that at the same time they may win richer profits and greater glory among the ignorant; but how much more disgraceful thus to have treated the philosophy of Christ. On the contrary, it is right to strive for the opposite, to make it as easy and as open to all men as we possibly can; and our object should be not to show off our own attainments but to attract as many as we can to the Christian life.

At this moment war is preparing against the Turks; and whatever the intentions of those who started it, we must pray that it may turn out well, not for a chosen few but for all in common. But what do we suppose will happen if, when we have beaten them (for I do not suppose we shall slaughter them to a man), to persuade them to embrace Christianity we set before them the works of Ockham and Durandus and their like, of Scotus and Gabriel and Alvaro? What will they think, what will their feelings be (for though nothing else, they are at least human beings), when they hear these thorny and impenetrable thickets of argument – instances, formalities, quiddities, relativities – particularly when they see so little agreement on them among those eminent religious teachers that they often fight each other until they are pale with fury and reduced to insults and spitting and sometimes even to fisticuffs? There are the Friars Preacher battling at short and long range for their precious Thomas; the Minorites on the other side defending their most Subtle and Seraphic Doctors, shield linked with shield, some speaking as nominalists and others as realists. What if they see it is such a difficult subject that there can be no end to the discussion, what words we should use in

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71 hope] Cf Rom 5:5.
71 rabbins] Cf below lines 484–7.
73 Christ died] Cf 1 Cor 8:11; Rom 14:15.
75 wise king] Prov 1:1, etc
85 Turks] Cf Ep 785:32–38.
90 Ockham ... Alvaro] A random assortment of scholastic theologians; cf Ep 844:199n. William of Ockham, d 1349; John Duns Scotus; Alvaro Pelayo, d 1352; cf Ep 575:37n.
99 Doctors] The Subtle Doctor is the Franciscan John Duns Scotus; the Seraphic is St Bonaventure.

speaking of Christ? Just as though you were concerned with some demon very difficult to please, whom you will have called up for your own damnation if you make any slip in the prescribed form of words, and not really with a most merciful Saviour, who demands nothing from us except a pure and simple life. I ask you, in heaven's name; what good will such things do, especially if this self-confident doctrine finds its counterpart in our character and way of life? If our noise and bustle, worse than any tyrant's, give them a clear idea of our ambition, if from our rapacity and lechery and oppression they learn how greedy and profligate and cruel we are, how can we find the effrontery to urge Christ's teaching on them, which is so infinitely different from all this? We shall have found the most effective way to defeat the Turks, once they have seen shining forth in us Christ's teaching and example, once they realize that we are not greedy for their empire, we have no thirst for their gold and no desire for their possessions, but seek nothing at all beyond their salvation and the glory of Christ. This is the true and genuine and effective theology, which long ago made proud philosophers and unconquered monarchs bow the knee to Christ. If this and this alone could be our purpose, Christ himself will be at our side.

Nor does it make sense to prove ourselves truly Christians by killing as many as we can, but by their salvation; not by sacrificing to Orcus many thousands of the infidel, but by turning as many as we can of those infidels into believers; not by cursing them with terrible execrations, but by praying religiously that heaven may send them salvation and a better state of mind. If we cannot put our hearts into something of the sort, we shall degenerate into Turks long before we convert the Turks to our way of thinking. Suppose the chances of war, which are always doubtful, fall in our favour, the result may extend the kingdom of the pope and his cardinals; it will not extend the kingdom of Christ. His realm can never flourish until religion and charity and peace and innocence are in flower; as we are confident will happen under the leadership of our excellent Leo the Tenth, if his zeal for what is best is not swept in another direction by the tide of human affairs. Christ declares himself the champion and prince of the kingdom of heaven; but there is nothing grand in this unless heaven is triumphant. For Christ did not die in order that the riches, the abundance, the armaments, and all the fuss and fury of an earthly kingdom, which were once in the hands of pagans, or at least of lay princes not so very far from paganism, should now belong to a limited number of priests.

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121 Orcus] The ruler of the realm of the dead, later identified with Pluto

133 prince] Cf John 18:36–7.

In my own opinion it will be found a good plan, long before we make the attempt by force of arms, to seek to win them by letters and by pamphlets. What sort of letter, you ask? No threats, no bluster; they must breathe true fatherly affection and recall the spirit of Peter and Paul, they must not merely have the word 'apostolic' in the superscription, they must revive the activity of the apostles. I am not ignorant, of course, that all the springs and sources of the Christian philosophy are enshrined in the books of evangelists and apostles; but the expression is alien and often confused, and the figures and turns of speech are out of the way, and this makes them so difficult that even we often have to toil quite hard before we understand them. It will be the best plan, therefore, in my opinion to entrust to a number of men both saintly and scholarly the task of reducing into brief compass the whole philosophy of Christ, out of its purest sources in evangelists and apostles and its most generally accepted expositors, in a simple but none the less scholarly fashion, short but clear. What concerns the faith should be set out clause by clause, as few as possible; what relates to life should also be imparted in few words, and those words so chosen as to make them understand that Christ's yoke is easy and comfortable and not harsh; to make them understand that they have acquired fathers and not despots, shepherds not robbers, and are invited to accept salvation and not dragged by force into slavery. They are human beings, as we are; there is neither steel nor adamant in their hearts. It is possible that they may be civilized, possible they may be won over by kindness which tames even wild beasts. And the most effective thing of all is Christian truth. But those to whom the Roman pontiff chooses to delegate this task will be instructed at the same time not to diverge in any way from Christ our pattern, and at no point to consider the affections or desires of men.

Something of this sort was taking shape in my mind after a fashion when I was working on this *Enchiridion*. I could see that the common body of Christians was corrupt not only in its affections but in its ideas. I pondered on the fact that those who profess themselves pastors and doctors for the most part misuse these titles, which belong to Christ, for their own advantage; to say nothing for the moment of those whose fiat, yes or no, keeps all human affairs in perpetual flux, and at whose faults however obvious it is scarcely permitted to let fall a sigh. When all is dark, when the world is in tumult and men's opinions differ so widely, where can we take refuge, if not upon the sheet-anchor of the Gospel teaching? Is there any religious man who does not see with sorrow that this generation is far the

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167 *Enchiridion*] The title can mean either 'dagger' or 'handbook.'
171 yes or no] *Adagia* IV ix 39

most corrupt there has ever been? When did tyranny and greed lord it thus widely or go thus unpunished? When was so much importance ever attached to ceremonies? When did iniquity abound with so little to restrain it? When did charity wax colder? All we appeal to, all we read, all we hear, all our decisions – what do they taste of except of ambition and greed? Our plight would be sorry indeed, had not Christ left us some live coals of his teaching, some living unfailing rivulets from the spring of his mind. What we must do is this: abandon the cinders offered us by men and blow up those coals of his into flame (I gladly use Paul's word); follow up those rivulets until we find the living water that springs up to life eternal. We explore the bowels of this earth of ours to get the ores which feed our vices; are we never to mine the rich lodes of Christ, to win thence the salvation of souls? The winter of our wickedness never brings so low the fire of charity that it cannot be rekindled from the flint. Christ is our Rock; and this rock has in it the seeds of heavenly fire and veins of living water. Abraham long ago dug wells in every country, seeking veins of living water; and when the Philistines filled them with earth they were dug anew by Isaac and his sons, who, not content with restoring the old wells, dug new ones besides. Again the Philistines stir up strife and opposition; but he does not cease to dig.

Nor are we quite free of Philistines nowadays, who get more pleasure from earth than from fountains of living water – those people, I mean, who reek of earthly things and twist the Gospel teaching to serve earthly appetites, compelling it to be the slave of human ambition and to enhance their own discreditable gains and their despotic rule. And if some Isaac or one of his household should dig and find a pure source, at once they are all protests and objections because they know this source will be an obstacle to their gains and block their ambitions, even though it makes for Christ's glory. It is not long before they throw earth into it and stop up the source by some corrupt interpretation, driving away the man with the spade, or at the least so befoul the water with mud and filth that he who drinks from it gets more dirt and filth than liquid. They do not wish those who thirst after righteousness to drink from the crystal spring but take them to their trampled cisterns, which are full of rubble and contain no water. But the real sons of Isaac – Christ's true worshippers, that is – must not grow weary of this

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185 Paul's word] 2 Tim 1:6; Rom 12:20

187 vices] Ovid *Metamorphoses* 2.769. Johann Poppenruyter owned a gun-foundry at Mechelen.

190 our Rock] 1 Cor 10:4

193 Isaac] Cf Gen 26:14–18.

209 cisterns] Jer 2:13

labour. For those who tip earth into the Gospel springs wish to be thought to be of their number, so that now it is by no means safe to teach the pure faith of Christ among Christians. So much have the Philistines grown in strength, fighting for earth, preaching earthly things and not the things of heaven, human things and not divine – those things, in fact, which tend not to Christ's glory but to the profit of those who traffic in indulgences, in compositions, in dispensations, and suchlike merchandise. And this traffic is all the more perilous because they give their greed a façade of great names, eminent princes, the supreme pontiff, even Christ himself. And yet no man more truly forwards the business of the pontiff than he who publishes in its pure form the heavenly philosophy of Christ, of which the pope is the principal teacher. No man does princes better service than he who sees to it that the condition of the people is as prosperous as possible and that they suffer as little as possible from tyranny.

But at this point someone from the serried ranks of our universities will protest: 'It is easy to lay down in general what we should aim at and what we should avoid; but how in the mean time are we to answer those who need advice about what has happened and may happen?' In the first place, human affairs take so many shapes that definite answers cannot be provided for them all. Secondly, circumstances vary so widely that, unless we know what they are, any definite answer is impossible. Last but not least, I rather doubt whether those who deal in principles can give a definite answer; they differ about so many points among themselves. And the more intelligent ones of that sort do not usually reply 'This you must do; do not do that' but 'This is in my view the safer course; this I regard as tolerable.' If only we have the single eye filled with light of which the Gospel speaks, if our minds are like a house with the lamp of true faith set on a lampstand, these minor points will easily be scattered like a mist. If we have Christian charity like a carpenter's rule, everything will easily be set straight by that. But what will you do if this rule disagrees with the accepted tradition of centuries and the conduct laid down by princes in their laws? For even that not seldom happens. Do not condemn what is done by princes in the execution of their duty; but conversely do not sully that heavenly philosophy of Christ by confusing it with the decrees of man. Let Christ remain what he is, the centre, with several circles running

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216 indulgences] For Erasmus' recent acquaintance with Luther's Ninety-five Theses on indulgences see below lines 430–8, and Ep 785:39n. For Luther's reaction to this preface cf Ep 933:22–7.

236 Gospel] Matt 6:22

244 several circles] Cf J.K. McConica 'Erasmus and the Grammar of Consent' *Scrinium* II 82–4; Bietenholz *History and Biography* 85–6.

round him. Do not move that central mark from its place. Those who are nearest Christ – priests, bishops, cardinals, popes, and those whose business it is to follow the Lamb wherever he may lead them – should embrace the intense purity of the centre and pass on as much as they can to those next to them. Let the second circle be for the lay princes, who with their armies and their laws serve Christ after their fashion, whether in a just war they defeat the enemy and preserve the public peace or by lawful punishments keep crime in check. And yet, since of necessity they deal with business which involves the dregs of society and worldly affairs, there is a risk that they may let things go too far: that they may fight a war not for the public good but for their own advantage, that in the name of justice they may use severity even against men who might have been cured by mercy, that under the pretext of absolute power they may pillage the people whose interests it was their duty to protect.

Moreover, just as Christ like a source of eternal fire draws the order of priests close to him and as it were kindles them and purifies them from all earthly contagion, so it is the duty of priests, and especially of those in the highest stations, to summon princes, as far as they can, to themselves. If a war threatens, popes must use all their efforts, either to secure a settlement without bloodshed or, if the tempests in human affairs make that impossible, to urge that the war is fought with less cruelty and does not last long. In the old days, even when criminals were justly condemned, bishops used their authority to appeal for them, and sometimes rescued a criminal from the hands of his judges, as Augustine openly records in his letters. For there are some things very necessary to the ordering of a state which, even so, Christ either accepted in silence or rejected, or neither approved nor disapproved but as it were connives at them. He does not recognize the coin of Caesar and his superscription; he orders tribute to be paid if it is due, as though the question did not much concern him, provided that what is owed to God is paid to him. The woman taken in adultery he neither condemns nor openly excuses, only tells her to go and sin no more. On those condemned by Pilate whose blood he mingled with their sacrifices Christ expresses no opinion, whether they suffered this fate rightly or no; he only threatens a similar fate to all men if they do not repent. Moreover, when asked to arbitrate in the

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247 Lamb] Rev 14:4
268 Augustine] Cf Augustine's Epp 100, 133–4, 139, 204.
271 coin of Caesar] Cf Matt 22:17–22.
274 adultery] Cf John 8:7.
275 by Pilate] Cf Luke 13:1–3.
278 arbitrate] Cf Luke 12:13–15.

division of an inheritance, he openly refuses the task, as though to decide about such mundane things were unworthy of himself, who must teach heavenly things. On the other hand, there are some things which he openly abhors. On the Pharisees for their greed, on hypocrites, on rich men in their pride he calls down woe. Never does he rebuke his apostles more sharply than when they are assailed by a desire for revenge or by a feeling of ambition. When they asked whether they should call down fire from heaven to burn up the city from which they were shut out, 'Ye know not,' he said, 'what spirit ye are of.' When Peter tried to turn him back from the cross into the world again, he calls him Satan. When they were disputing about which of them should be first, think in how many ways and how often he recalled them to the opposite point of view! There are some things also which he openly teaches and prescribes: not to resist evil, to do good to our enemies, to be gentle at heart, and more of the same kind.

We must make distinctions in these things and set them each in its proper place. Let us not therefore without more ado make Christ responsible for the actions of princes or lay magistrates, or ascribe them, as they say nowadays, to a divine right. They handle a certain amount of worldly business that has no part at all in Christian purity; and yet this must not be criticized, because it is necessary for the conservation of society. It is not their business to see that we are good, but to make us less bad and to reduce the amount of harm that bad men can do to the common weal. We therefore owe them their due honour, because as far as they can they promote divine justice and the public peace, without which even the province of piety is sometimes thrown into confusion. They must be honoured where they perform their duty and put up with perhaps where they use their power for their own advantage, lest something worse arise in their place. For even in these there is a subdued image, a shadow rather, of divine justice; which ought however to shine forth much more distinctly and visibly and in greater purity in the character and the legislation of priests. A reflection is one thing in polished steel and another in the glass of a mirror.

In a third circle let us place the common people all together, as the most earthy portion of this world, but not so earthy that they are not members of Christ's body just the same. Not only the eyes are members of the body, but shins too and feet and privy parts. These must be given more indulgence, but

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283 woe] Matt 22:13–29
286 'Ye know not'] Luke 9:55
288 Satan] Matt 16:23
288 disputing] Mark 9:33–49
291 teaches] Matt 5:5, 39, 44, etc

in such a way as to invite them, as far as possible, to follow the things that Christ approves. For in this body what was once a foot may become an eye. And yet, just as princes, if they are wicked, should not be aroused by savage attacks, for fear that if provoked they may cause more grievous trouble, as Augustine remarks, so the people in their weakness must be tolerated and fostered with paternal indulgence, following the example of Christ, who so gently tolerated and fostered his disciples, until by degrees they grow to maturity in Christ. For piety like other things has its infancy, it has its periods of growth, it has its full and vigorous adult strength. But every man according to the measure that is given him must strive upwards towards Christ. Of the four elements each has its appointed place. But fire, which has the highest station, gradually sweeps all things into itself and transforms them so far as it may to its own nature. Water it evaporates and turns into air, and air it rarefies and transforms into itself. Paul makes many concessions to the Corinthians, distinguishing for the time being what ideal he would set before those who are perfect in the Lord's name and what indulgences he would allow to the weaker brethren in his own name; but always in the hope that they may make progress. Over the Galatians he broods a second time until Christ take shape in them.

If now someone thinks that this circle is more suitable for princes, there will be no serious difference of opinion between us. For if we observe their characters, we shall hardly find Christians more rudimentary than they; I speak of the majority, but not of all.

Whatever is outside the third circle is abominable, whenever and wherever it appears. In this class are ambition, love of money, lechery, anger, revenge, jealousy, slander, and the other plagues. These however do not become incurable until they make themselves respectable under a mask of religion and duty and worm their way into higher circles: when, for example, we exercise tyrannical power under a pretext of justice and right, when we make religion an excuse for personal gain, when we seek worldly rule in the name of defending the church, when laws are laid down which purport to serve Christ's cause and in fact are poles apart from the teaching of Christ. And so it must be impressed upon all men that there is a goal towards which they must strive. And there is only one goal: Christ, and his teaching in all its purity. If in place of this heavenly goal you set up an earthly one, the man who strives to make progress will have nothing to which he can rightly direct his efforts. The highest must be set before everyone, that at least we may achieve something halfway.

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318 Augustine] Cf *De civitate Dei* 5.21.
331 Galatians] Gal 4:19

And there is no reason to excuse any walk of life from pursuit of this goal. The perfection of Christ lies in our desires, not in our walk of life; it is to be found in the spirit, not in clothing or in choice of food. Among monks there are some who are barely included in the outermost circle; and yet I speak of good men – but of weaker brethren. Among those who have married twice there are some whom Christ thinks worthy of the first circle. Nor is it at the same time an insult to any calling in life if that which is best and most perfect is held up to all alike. Do we suppose that Plato insulted all existing city-states when in his *Republic* he put forward as a pattern such a polity as had never yet been seen? Did Quintilian show contempt for the entire profession of orators when he composed the pattern of such an orator as had never yet existed? Are you far from your exemplar? This does not mean rejection; it is a stimulus to progress. Are you fairly close? This tells you to come even nearer. For no one has ever gone so far that there is no room for further improvement.

Every single walk of life has certain special risks of degeneration related to it. The man who points these out casts no slur on that class of men; he does them a service. The prosperity of princes runs a risk of tyranny, of folly, of flattery, of moral decay. He who points out that these must be avoided is a benefactor to princes as a class. He means no reflection on that majesty of which they are so proud if he shows them wherein the true majesty of princes is to be found, if he reminds them of the oath they swore at their accession, of their duty to their people and to its magistrates. The princes of the church are exposed as a rule to two plagues in particular, avarice and ambition. As though he foresaw this, that first shepherd after Christ warns bishops to feed their flocks and not rob them or shear them close; not to feed them with an eye to improper gain, but with a free and willing heart; not to play the tyrant over those under them, and to urge them on the path to piety by setting an example, not by threats and orders. Will a man who points out how bishops become truly great and powerful and rich therefore be thought to reflect on the clergy? The monastic profession, moreover, is often dogged, besides other distempers, by superstition, pride, hypocrisy, and slander. And so he does not immediately condemn their way of life who tells them where true religion is to be found; how far from pride is true Christian piety; how far from pretence is real charity; what strife there is between genuine religion and a poisonous tongue – particularly if he shows what must be avoided with the moderation which blames no individual and criticizes no Order. Is anything in human affairs so prosperous that its

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357 married twice] Such as Thomas More

377 feed their flocks] Cf 1 Pet 5:2–3.

particular pests have never been attached to it? And so, just as a man who points out the things by which true health is damaged or preserved promotes and does not hinder the health of the body, so he who demonstrates the corruptions of true religion and their remedies does not discourage the religious life but rather spurs on others to adopt it.

For I hear that certain people so interpret the principles of this small book, since they give less weight to ceremonies than those would wish who give them too much, and not much to human regulations, as turning men's minds away from the monastic life. So true is it that one can express nothing cautiously enough to prevent bad men from seizing on it as a base for calumny or a handle for sin, so that it is scarcely safe to give good advice any more. If one discourages the wars which we have been fighting for some centuries now for worthless objects in a worse than gentile spirit, one is blackened with false accusations of sympathy with those who say that Christians must never go to war. For we have made the authors of this view heretical because some pope appears to approve of war. But there is no black mark for him who disregards the teaching of Christ and his apostles and sounds the trumpet for a war, regardless of the reasons. Should a man point out that it would be in the true spirit of the apostles to bring the Turks over to religion by the resources of Christ rather than by force of arms, he finds himself at once suspected of teaching that when Turks attack Christians they must by no means be restrained. If a man praises the frugal life of the apostles and makes some criticism of the luxury of our times, there is no shortage of people to accuse him of favouring the Ebionites. Should he urge on married couples with some emphasis that piety and mutual understanding are a better cement for their union than the physical relationship and that the purity of wedlock should approach as near as possible to virginity, he is suspected of thinking with the Marcionites that all sex must be foul. Should he maintain that in disputes, and in theological disputes especially, there should be no desire merely to win, no obstinate defence of one's position, no theatrical desire to show off one's powers, he is wrongly traduced as opposed to universities altogether. When St Augustine says that students of dialectic must avoid a passion for disputation, he is not condemning dialectic; he points out its besetting sin, that we may avoid it.

Again, suppose one were to criticize the topsy-turvy judgment of the

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413 Ebionites] Name used since the second century for some independent sects of Judaeo-Christians

417 Marcionites] The sect of bishop Marcion in the second century, noted for severe asceticism and the rejection of marriage

421 Augustine] Cf *De doctrina christiana* 2.31.48 (CC 22:65–6).

public, who give first place among the virtues to those of least importance, and conversely among the vices condemn most strongly those which are most venial as though they were the worst, and the reverse; one is taken to task at once as though one were in favour of the vices which one subordinates to something worse and condemned virtuous actions to which one prefers others as nearer to sanctity. If one said, for example, that it would be safer to trust to good works than to papal dispensations, one is not condemning his dispensations in any case, but preferring what according to Christ's teaching is more reliable. In the same way, if one said that those who stay at home and look after their wives and children do a better thing than those who go off to inspect Rome, Jerusalem, or Compostella, and that money spent on these long and dangerous journeys would more piously be distributed to the deserving poor, one does not condemn their pious ambition but puts it second to something nearer to true piety.

Again it is not confined to our own times to condemn certain vices as though no others existed, while flattering others as though they were not vices, when in fact they are the more outrageous class of the two. Augustine complains in his letters that lechery is the one offence imputed to the clergy in Africa, while the vices of avarice and drunkenness are almost counted to their credit. One offence we exaggerate in tragic fashion as the last degree of horror – to handle the Lord's body with the same hands that have touched the body of a whore. There are even people who dare assert in public in dramatic tones that it is a lesser fault for a woman to have connection with a brute beast than with a priest. The man who refutes their impudence is not thereby instantly in favour of unchaste priests, but he points out that factors have been neglected which should be given greater weight. A priest may be a gambler, a warrior or a swordsman, quite illiterate, wholly immersed in secular business, devoted to carrying out criminal orders from criminal princes: they do not protest so loudly against him, although as he handles the holy mysteries he is entirely profane. A priest may be a scandalmonger who with poisonous tongue and contrived scurrilities attacks the reputation of a man who has done nothing to deserve it and has in fact done him a service: why do we not greet this with cries of 'Outrage! How dare you with that hellish poison on your tongue, with that mouth with which you butcher an innocent man, both consecrate and eat the body of him who died for the

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435 Compostella] Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, the third of the great centres of pilgrimage

441 Augustine] Cf Augustine's Ep 22.1.3.

458 hellish poison] Cf Ep 908:11–18, Allen Ep 1053:421–40 and corresponding note in CWE.

ungodly too?' But this is an evil of which we think so little that men who profess religion in its purest form almost get credit for it. Those men who set a shocking example to the public by openly keeping loose women in their homes ought to be rebuked. Of course: but this other sin is not a little more hateful in the eyes of Christ. One does not condemn butter if one would rather eat honey; one does not approve of fever if one opines that frenzy is more to be avoided. Nor is it easy to express what a decay in moral standards stems from topsy-turvy judgments like this.

Again, there are things enrolled among the virtues which wear even so the mask of piety without its genuine force; so much so that, unless you look where you are going, they extinguish true piety altogether. If only a moderate danger to religion lurked in ceremonies, Paul would not vent his indignation upon them so vigorously in all his Epistles. And yet nowhere do I condemn a moderate degree of ceremony; but I cannot endure that holiness from stem to stern, as they say, should be thought to lie in them. St Augustine even forbade the clerks who were members of his household to wear any peculiar garb; if they wished to win public respect, he said, they should win it by character and not costume. But nowadays what strange prodigious dress we see! Not that I am against this; but I am greatly surprised that too much importance should be given to things which might perhaps rightly be criticized and so little to the only things that really are worth notice. I have no wish to upbraid the Franciscans for being devoted to their own rule and the Benedictines for devotion to theirs; I object that some of them think their rule more important than the Gospel. I only hope that this objection does not apply to the majority. I do not attack them because some live on fish, some on vegetables and salads, and some on eggs; but I do point out that those men make a grievous mistake who, in a Jewish spirit, flatter themselves in things like this that they are just, and take such trifles invented by mere men to be a reason to look down on others, while those same men count it no fault at all to make lying attacks on another man's fair fame. On discrimination in food Christ nowhere lays down any rule, nor do the apostles; Paul often speaks against it. Virulent evil-speaking is execrated by Christ and abhorred in the writings of the apostles. And yet on questions of food we wish to give an impression of petty piety; in evil-speaking we are bold and fearless. If a man calls attention to this, in loving language and in general terms, must he, I ask you, be thought to harm the cause of religion? Is

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474 stem to stern] Cf *Adagia* I i 8.
475 Augustine] Cf Ep 447:515–18 and PL 32:1380.
486 Jewish spirit] Cf Epp 541:149–70n, 694 introduction, 891:33.

anyone mad enough to seek a reputation for eloquence by bringing the faults of monks out into the day? But these men are afraid that their subordinates will be less docile, and also that fewer people will wish to be admitted to their society. In fact, no one is more obedient, more *peitharches* to use Paul's expression, than the man who has drunk deep of the spirit of Christ and now begins to be free. True charity takes all things in good part, endures all things, refuses nothing, obeys those who are set over it, not only if they are kind and accommodating but even if they are difficult and harsh.

None the less this is a point that those set in authority must watch all the time: they must not convert the obedience of others into tyranny for themselves, and therefore prefer to have them superstitious rather than godly, that they may observe their masters' lightest whim. They love to hear themselves called fathers; and yet what father is there in real life who wishes that his children may remain infants always, that he may rule them more easily at his own sweet will? On the other hand, those who make progress towards liberty in Christ must be on their guard particularly not to use their liberty as a cloak for the flesh, as Paul points out, and not, as Peter teaches, to make their liberty a covering for wickedness. And if two or three of them have misused this liberty, it is not right for this reason to keep them all without more ado in perpetual Judaism. This will be understood by anyone who has observed that none of them tie the knot of ceremonies tighter than those who use this as a pretext for their rule and live for their own stomachs, not for Christ.

So they need not fear that the sect of Essenes may not spread, in all this great variety of men and minds, which means that nothing is too absurd to seem attractive to many. Not but what these men will find it more desirable that recruits to the religious life should be honourable and genuine rather than numerous. And would that it had been provided by law that no one under the age of thirty should put his head into that kind of noose, before he has learnt to know himself and has discovered the force of true religion! In any case those who take the Pharisees as the model in their business, and course over land and sea that they may make one proselyte, will never be short of inexperienced young men whom they can get into their net and try to persuade. Everywhere the number of fools and simple people is

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499 Paul's expression] In Titus 3:1, meaning 'submissive'
512 Paul] Gal 5:13
512 Peter] 1 Pet 2:16
517 stomachs] Cf Rom 16:18.
519 Essenes] A brotherhood of ascetic Jews at the time of Christ
524 thirty] Note Erasmus' personal experience; Ep 447:714–15, 734–5.
527 proselyte] Cf Matt 23:15; Ep 447:26–37.

enormous. I at least would hope, and so I doubt not do all truly religious men, that the religion of the Gospel might be so deeply loved by all that they would be content with this, and no one go off in search of a Benedictine or Franciscan rule; and Benedict himself and Francis would, I am sure, hope the same thing. Moses rejoices to find himself obscured by the glory of Christ; and they would rejoice likewise, if our love for the law of the Gospel made us despise all human codes. How I wish all Christians lived in such a way that those who are now called religious might seem hardly religious at all! Even today this is true in not a few cases; for why need I conceal what is well known? And yet in ancient days the first origin of the monastic life was a retreat from the cruelty of those who worshipped idols. The codes of the monks who soon followed them were nothing but a summons back to Christ. The courts of princes were in old days more Christian in name than in their manner of life. Bishops were soon attacked by the diseases of ambition and greed. The primitive fervour of the common people cooled. Hence the retreat aimed at by Benedict and Bernard after him, and then by many more. It was the banding together of a few men aimed at nothing but a pure and simple Christianity.

If anyone were to study with attention the life and rules of Benedict or Francis or Augustine, he will find that they had no other ambition than to live with friends who joined them willingly a life according to the teaching of the Gospel in liberty of spirit; and that they were compelled to lay down some rules for dress and food and other external things, for they were afraid that, as often happens, more importance might be ascribed to the constitutions of human origin than to the Gospel. They had a horror of riches; they avoided honours, even in the church. They laboured with their hands, in order not only to be a burden to no man, but to have to give to others in need; they occupied mountain-tops, they made their nests in marshy places, they lived in sandy wastes and deserts. And then they ruled this great concourse of men without violent language and whipping and prisons, but solely by teaching and exhorting, by mutual service and by examples of godly life. Such were the monks so loved and praised by Basil and defended by Chrysostom; to them was appropriate, in any case, what St Jerome writes to Marcella – that choirs of monks and virgins are a blossom and most precious stone among the adornments of the church. On this tribute monks of all kinds pride themselves astonishingly today; they shall be welcome to claim

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544 cooled] Rev 5:12

548 If anyone ... 581 patriarchs] Added by Erasmus in 1529; see introduction.

561 Basil] St Basil the Great (fourth century), who formulated the rules of monastic life

562 Jerome] Cf Jerome's Ep 46.10 (CSEL 54:339).

the praise if at the same time they follow the example. For thereafter that wisest of men subjoins a pattern for those monks whom he thought worthy of the name. 'Their language differs,' he says, 'but their religion is one. There are almost as many ways of chanting the psalter as there are different nationalities. In spite of this – what is perhaps the first virtue among Christians – they make no proud claims for their own ascetic life. There is a contest of humility between them all. Whoever was last is thought by them to be first. In clothing there is no distinction, no attempt to impress. The way they may choose to walk is no subject for criticism or for praise. Fasting wins no one promotion; refusal to eat earns no particular respect; moderate eating carries no stigma. Everyone stands or falls by the judgment of his Lord. No man judges another, that he may not be judged by the Lord; and what is common in so many places, the use of their teeth to gnaw at one another, simply does not exist.' Such is the picture of an ideal monk which he set forth; let him that pleases compare it with the customs of the present day.

Such were the first beginnings of monasticism, and such its patriarchs. Then gradually, with the passage of time, wealth grew, and with wealth ceremonies; and the genuine piety and simplicity grew cool. And though we see monasteries everywhere whose ways have sunk lower than the laity, even so the world is burdened with fresh foundations, as though they likewise were not likely to fall in the same way. Once, as I said, the monastic life was a refuge from the world. Now men are called monks who spend all their time in the very heart of worldly business and exercise a kind of despotism in human affairs. And yet because of their dress, or because of some name they bear, they claim so much sanctity for themselves that compared with them they think other people hardly Christians. Why do we so closely confine the professed service of Christ, which he wished to be as wide open as possible? If we are moved by splendid names, what else, I ask you, is a city than a great monastery? Monks obey their abbot or those who are set over them; citizens are obedient to their bishop and their pastors, whom Christ himself, not human authority, set over them. Monks live in leisure and are fed by the liberality of other people, possessing in common what has come to them without effort on their part (of wicked monks I say nothing for the present); citizens, each according to his means, share what they have won by their own industry with those in need. Then as concerns the vow of chastity, I would not dare to unfold how little difference there is between celibacy of the ordinary kind and chastity in wedlock. Last but not least, we shall not greatly feel the lack of those three vows which are man's

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603 three vows] The vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience were basic to Christian monasticism.

invention in someone who has kept in sincerity and purity that one great vow, which we took in our baptism not to man but to Christ. Then if you compare the wicked men in both classes, there is no question that laymen are preferable. Compare the good, and there is very little difference, if there is any at all, except perhaps that they who live a religious life under less compulsion seem more truly religious. The result is therefore that no one should be foolishly self-satisfied because his way of life is not that of other people, nor should he despise or condemn the way of life of others. But in every walk of life let this be the common aim of us all, that to the best of our power we should struggle towards the goal that is set before us all, even Christ, exhorting and even helping one another, with no envy of those who are ahead of us in the race and no scorn for the weak who cannot yet keep up with us. And then, when every man has done his best, he must not become like the Pharisee in the Gospel, who boasts of his good deeds before God: 'I fast twice on the sabbath day,' and so on, but follow Christ's advice and say sincerely, say to himself and not to others only, 'I am an unprofitable servant; all I have done was what I had to do.' No one shows more true confidence than he who shows this kind of diffidence. No one is further from true religion than the man who thinks himself truly religious. And never does true Christian piety come off worse than when what belongs to the world is misrepresented as Christ's and man's authority is set above God's. We have one head, and in him we must all agree if we wish to be truly Christians. Moreover, he who obeys a man who summons him to follow Christ obeys Christ and not man. And he who endures men who are all sham – cruel domineering men who teach not what makes for religion but what bolsters their own tyranny – displays the patience of a Christian only as long as the commands they issue make him only unhappy and not ungodly too. Otherwise, he will do better to meet them with the Apostle's answer on his lips: 'We ought to obey God rather than men.'

But I long ago passed the bounds of a letter, so little count does one take of time when gossiping most agreeably with a very dear friend. The book, virtually reborn in Froben's types, is much more elegant and correct than it was before and wings its way now to your arms. I have added some

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617 Pharisee] Luke 18:12

619 servant] Luke 17:10

631 Apostle's] Acts 5:29

635 elegant] The bulk of the *Enchiridion* text was probably already set in type when this letter was added. The date of July is given in the colophon of Froben's edition, but a brief advertisement in the name of the printer on the second-last leaf is dated 19 August 1518.

fragments from early works of mine. And I decided to attach this new edition to you, such as it is, rather than anyone else, that he who draws principles of holy living from Erasmus may find an example, in the shape of Volz, immediately at hand. Farewell, most worthy Father and peculiar glory of the true religious life.

Tell Sapidus from me to keep his true wits about him, which means, to be always his true self. Tell Wimpfeling to get his shining armour ready, to do battle shortly with the Turks, now that he has waged war long enough with priests who live in sin. I hope that one day we shall see him a bishop, glorious in mitre with two horns and crozier, riding high on his mule. Seriously though, I do ask you to give them and Ruser and my other friends my very warmest greetings. And remember sometimes to commend the salvation of your friend Erasmus in pure vows and pious prayers to Christ the almighty God.

Basel, eve of the Assumption, 1518

859 / To Udalricus Zasius — Basel, 22 August 1518

This is the answer to Ep 857. The autograph (Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel MS C VIA 35 no 105; cf Ep 857 introduction) was taken to Freiburg by Bonifacius Amerbach when he returned from his summer vacation. In AK II Ep 623 he describes Zasius' joy over it. The letter was printed at once, with amplifications, in the *Auctarium*.

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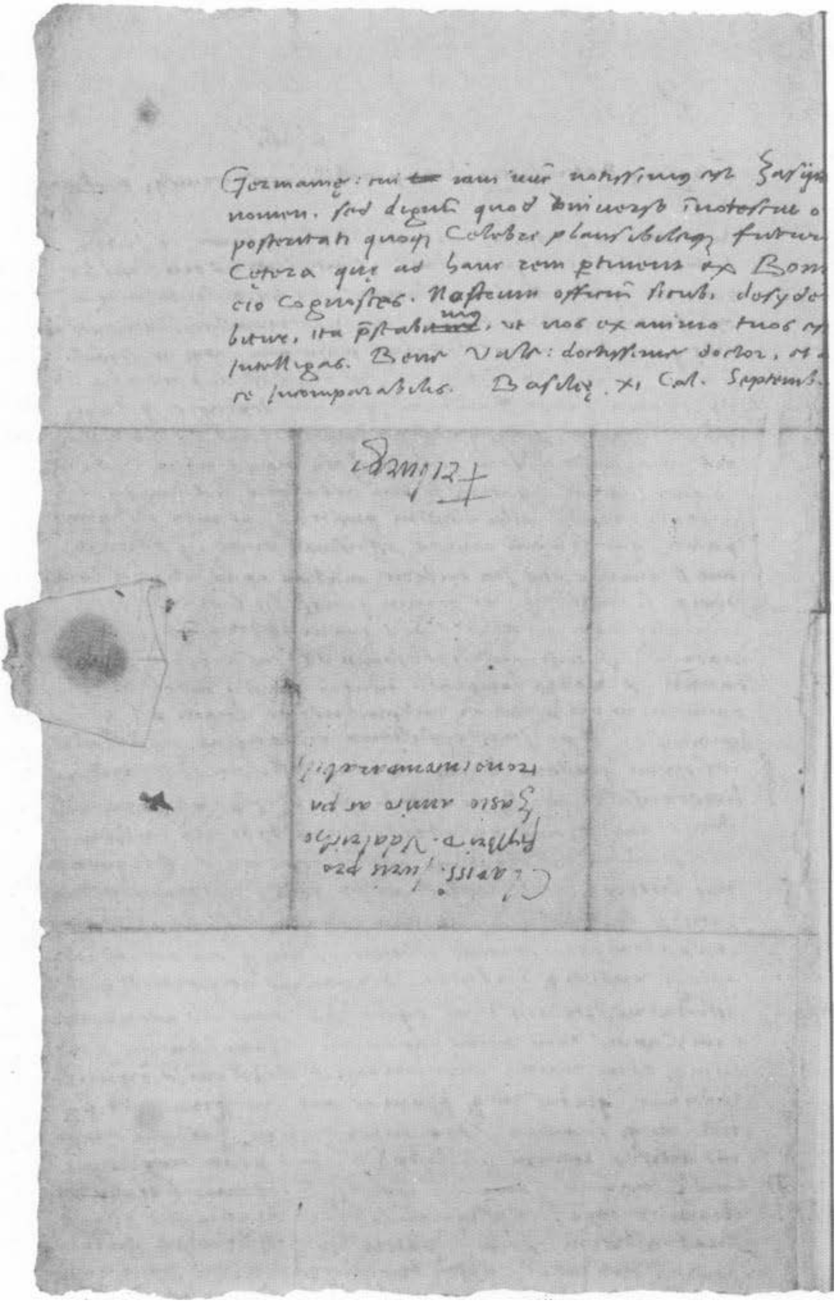
637 fragments] Since the first edition some minor texts had been published jointly with the *Enchiridion* (cf Ep 93). Two more were freshly added in Froben's edition: Ep 110 (from Colet) and a translation from Basil (cf Ep 229).

642 Sapidus] Johannes Sapidus (Witz), master of the school at Sélestat; see Ep 323 introduction.

643 Wimpfeling] Just before Erasmus arrived in Basel, on 11 May 1518 Jakob Wimpfeling (cf Ep 224 introduction) wrote a letter to Bruno and Basilius Amerbach and Johann Froben (AK II Ep 615), stating his reasons for not coming to Basel and offering them for publication an oration on the character of the Swiss addressed to Maximilian I. He hoped the Swiss would not be offended, seeing that Erasmus had treated them much more harshly in his *Adagia* II viii 65 (see Ep 855:4n). Wimpfeling's oration was apparently declined. Its gist was, according to his letter, that the Swiss should come to terms with the Empire and that both should join with the other European powers for a crusade against the Turks; cf Ep 891:26n.

645 priests who live in sin] The topic was treated in Wimpfeling's *De integritate libellus* (Strasbourg: J. Knobloch 1505), which caused lengthy controversies; cf Charles Schmidt *Histoire littéraire de l'Alsace* (Paris 1879) I 49–54.

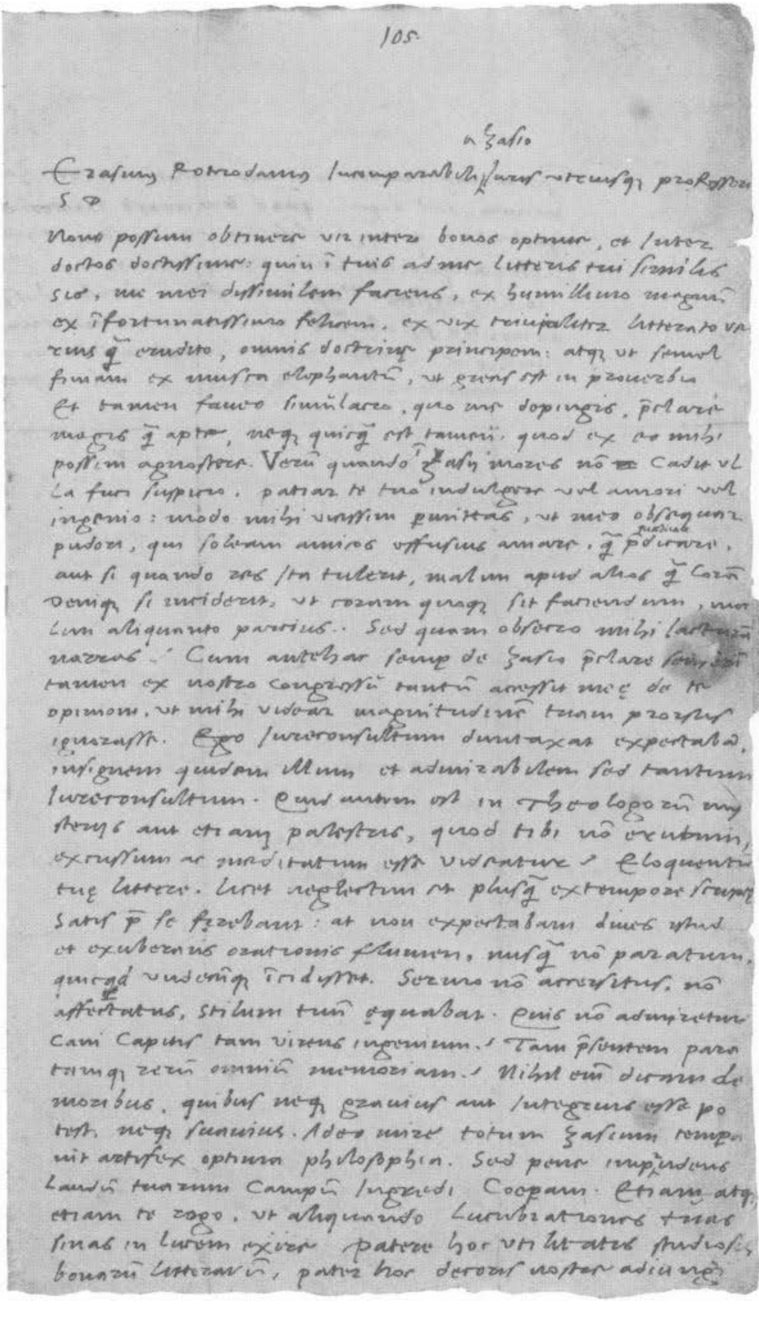
647 Ruser] For Johann Ruser and other members of the Sélestat literary society see Ep 302.


Germaniae: cui ~~tam~~ iam nunc notissimum est Zasij
nomen. Sed dignum quod universae innotescat o
posteritati quoque celebre plausibileque futurum
Caetera quae ad hanc rem pertinent ex Bon
cio cognosces. Nostrum officium sicubi desyde
bitur, ita praestabimus, ut nos ex animo tuos e
intelligas. Bene vale: doctissime doctor, et a
ce incomparabilis. Basileae. xi Cal. Septemb.

Clariss. iuris pro
fessori D. Udalricho
Zasio amico ac pa
trono incomparabili

Friburgi

Autograph letter, Erasmus to Udalricus Zasius, Epistle 859
Öffentliche Bibliothek, University of Basel, MS C VIA 35 no 105



105

a Zasio

Erasmus Roterodamus Incomparabili iuris vtriusque professori
S. D.

Non possum obtinere vir inter bonos optime, et inter doctos doctissime: quin tu tuis ad me litteris tui similis sis, me mei dissimilem facias, ex humillimo magnum ex infortunatissimo felicem, ex vix triuialiter litterato virum quam eruditum, omnis doctrinae principem: atque vt semel finiam ex musca elephantem, vt graecis est in prouerbio. Et tamen tanto simulacro, quo me depingis, praeclaro magis quam apto, neque quicquam est tamen, quod ex eo mihi possim agnoscere. Verum quando in Zasii mores non cadit vel leuis fuci suspicio, patiar te tuo indulgere vel amori vel ingenio: modo mihi vicissim permittas, vt meo obsequar pudori, qui soleam amicos effusius amare, quam praedicare, aut si quando res ita tulerit, malim apud alios quam coram. Denique si inuideris, vt rerum vtrumque sit faciendum, malim aliquanto parcius. Sed quam obsecro mihi lactucam narras? Cum audirem semper de Zasio praeclara, sum tamen ex nostro congressu tantum auctus meae de te opinionis, vt mihi videar magnitudinem tuam prorsus ignorasse. Ego iureconsultum duntaxat exspectabam, insignem quidem illum et admirabilem sed tantum iureconsultum. Quid autem est in Theologorum mysteriis aut etiam palaestris, quod tibi non exactum, exquisitum ac meditatum esse videatur? Eloquentiam tuae litterae, licet neglectum et plerumque extempore scriptae satis per se probabant: at non exspectabam diuitem illud et exuberans orationis flumen, nusquam non paratum, quoquo vndecumque intendisset. Sermo non accersitus, non affectatus, stilum tuum aequabat. Quis non admiraretur tam capax tam viuens ingenium? Tam praesentem paratamque rerum omnium memoriam? Nihil enim dicam de moribus, quibus neque grauius aut integrius esse potest, neque suauius. Adeo mire totum Zasium temperauit artifex optima philosophia. Sed pene imprudens laudum tuarum campum ingredi coeperam. Etiam atque etiam te rogo, vt aliquando lucubrationes tuas sinas in lucem exire, patere hoc vtilitatis studiosis bonarum litterarum, patere hoc decoris nostrae Germaniae.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS INCOMPARABLE FRIEND ZASIUS, DOCTOR OF CANON AND CIVIL LAW, GREETING

I cannot prevent it, best of good men and most scholarly of scholars: in your letters to me you are always like yourself, making me most unlike my own self, great instead of lowly, prosperous instead of most unfortunate, a leader in every branch of knowlege when I am not so much learned as barely instructed in the rudiments – to put it in a nutshell, you make me, as the Greek proverb has it, not a fly but an elephant. And yet I like your picture of me, though it is more brilliant than lifelike, as if some Apelles were to produce a splendid portrait finished with the greatest art and bearing no relation to the sitter. Yet there is in fact nothing in it that I can accept for myself. Only, as no shadow of deceit can fall on my Zasius' character, I must give you leave to indulge your affection or your creative gifts, provided you allow me in my turn to follow my natural modesty; for it is my way to let myself go in affection for my friends and not in panegyric. If the moment for that ever comes, I prefer to praise them in front of other men and not in their presence; and if in the end it must be done when they are present, I like to be somewhat more sparing.

But what pray is this loss of which you speak? I have always thought very well of you, but since our meeting my opinion has risen so much that I seem hitherto to have been quite ignorant of your quality. I was expecting a lawyer and no more – distinguished, admirable, but still a lawyer. Yet in all the mysteries (or may I say the wrestling schools?) of theology you have unearthed, valued, and pondered everything. In every branch of philosophy you are so much at home that it might seem to be your only study. Is there any book, ancient or modern, which you have not read, looked deeply into, and absorbed? And the more intimate observances that make a truly religious man are, I am told, yours in no common degree. Then you can write: your letters, careless as they are and written on the spur of the moment, gave proof of that; but I was not expecting that rich and copious flow of language, always at your service, whatever subject might have arisen from any quarter. In heaven's name, what brilliant conversation, fluent, apt, welling up naturally, never far-fetched, never artificial! Your casual conversation was as good as what you write. Who could fail to admire such intellectual vigour in a man of your grey hairs, and such a well-stocked and ready memory for everything? I will say nothing of your personality, with its unsurpassed

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859

8 proverb] Cf *Adagia* I ix 69.

19 loss] Cf Ep 857:21.

authority and integrity, and its charm as well. With such admirable cunning was our Zasius formed by that supreme craftsman, philosophy.

But almost unawares I was beginning to embark upon the subject of your merits. I do most sincerely beg you to allow your exquisite *Lucubrationes* someday to see the light. Do not refuse to confer this advantage on all lovers of humane letters, do not refuse to shed this new lustre on our native Germany; where the name of Zasius is already famous, but it deserves to become known to the whole world, and to be familiar and glorious among posterity. Anything else relative to this you will learn from Bonifacius Amerbach, a truly gifted young man in every way. If there is anything I can do for you, it shall be done in such a way as to show that I am entirely yours. Farewell, most learned doctor and most treasured friend.

Basel, 22 August 1518

To the distinguished doctor of laws Udalricus Zasius, his incomparable friend and benefactor. At Freiburg

860 / To Antonio Pucci Basel, 26 August 1518

This letter, printed in the *Farrago*, is primarily intended to secure a papal brief for the revised New Testament; see Ep 864 introduction.

Antonio Pucci (1484–1544) was a Florentine like Leo x, who had conferred the cardinal's hat upon his uncle, Lorenzo Pucci. Antonio succeeded Lorenzo as bishop of Pistoia in 1519 and was later himself created cardinal. He was repeatedly sent to Switzerland as a papal legate. His business was primarily the recruitment of Swiss troops, allegedly for the pope's crusade against the Turks. On his first mission he left Rome c 11 November 1517 (cf Ep 729:15–17). In a document dated from Zürich, 6 December 1517, he summarized the pope's instructions (cf Hutten *Opera* v 143–6; Ep 785:40n). In the summer of 1518 he visited Basel. He wished to honour Erasmus by inviting him to dinner, but Erasmus was prevented by ill health from accepting the invitation. As a result Pucci had to call upon him at Froben's workshop (cf Epp 852:38–9, 855:8–20; J. Gertophius *Recriminatio ... adversus ... Leum*, Basel: A. Cratander June 1520, 13). Erasmus later described Pucci as 'amazingly choleric and uncontrollable' (cf Ep 1188); he must have thought that an apology was in order and addressed this letter to Zürich (cf Ep 905:30–2), but on 1 October Pucci was expected in Rome (cf Ep 865:69–71). He returned to Switzerland late in 1519, bestowed the degree of MA upon the Basel printers Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopius (cf BRE Epp 149, 152), and urged the Swiss governments to suppress Luther's

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40 *Lucubrationes*] Cf Ep 862.

writings. In April 1521 he took Swiss soldiers with him to Italy; cf Zwingli *Werke* VII Epp 41, 161.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE REVEREND DR ANTONIO PUCCI, APOSTOLIC LEGATE IN SWITZERLAND

Respectful greetings, very reverend Father. I fear that your Highness must have accused my humble self some time ago of discourtesy and perhaps of gross ingratitude, seeing that, though the recipient of your most ready generosity, I have not acknowledged your kindness so much as by a letter. Yet if you knew the danger to which I have been exposed by attacks of phlegm over more than a month issuing in cruel diarrhoea accompanied by abdominal pain, while all the while I was obliged to find strength for the work I had in hand, I know that with your habitual goodness you would actually regret that I should have such a good excuse. Things came to such a pass that I considered making my will. And now the plague spreading everywhere drives me away from here, with the work not yet finished in the zealous pursuit of which I have hitherto despised not money alone but even life; such was my zeal to render a work which I had once dedicated to our Holy Father Leo X worthy of his holiness. For the first edition did not satisfy me at all points, though even that wins approval from all the most learned and most expert critics; there was to begin with a certain amount of barking from a few trouble-making curs; but they were men of no attainments, they had never read the book, and their comments were reserved for my absence – in front of me no one said anything. It will now reappear, if I mistake not, in such a polished shape that I hope it will be thought not unworthy of Pope Leo or of posterity. It would be vain to tell what labour it has cost me – nobody would believe it; I only hope it may bring equivalent profit to the common welfare of Christians, for that has been my only purpose.

And so your excellency in your turn will be able to make a substantial contribution, if you will be so kind as to secure from his holiness some brief to the effect that he welcomes this work of mine; this will stop the mouths of those few trouble-makers. Two cardinals, through whom I had offered a copy of the first edition to the Holy Father, had replied: Andrea Ammonio sent one letter to me here and it was lost; he kept the other and now I have lost both it and him. I wrote on this subject a few days ago to Cardinal Grimani and to Paolo Bombace.

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860

12 will] Erasmus' first known will dates from 1527 (see Allen VI 503–6). For his illness cf Ep 847:7n.

12 plague] Cf Ep 861:7n.

29 cardinals] See Ep 835 introduction.

And to relieve your mind of any possible misgivings, I will briefly explain the principles on which I have been working. After comparing many copies of the Greek and following the one which seemed the most accurate, I have made a Latin version and added my translation to the Greek to make it easy for the reader to compare the two; and in translating, my rule has been to try first of all to maintain as far as I could a pure Latin style, while respecting the simplicity of the Apostle's language. Secondly, I have endeavoured to see that passages which previously puzzled the reader by their ambiguity or the obscurity of their expression or by faults and awkwardness of language should now be rendered smooth and lucid, diverging most sparingly from the form of words and never from the sense; and the sense I have not dreamed up for myself, but gone to seek in Origen, Basil, Chrysostom, Cyril, Jerome, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Augustine. I have added annotations, which are now enlarged, in which I inform the reader what line I have followed and why, resting always on the opinion of ancient authorities. The common or Vulgate edition I do not pull down from its place (though whose it is is uncertain; it is known not to come from Cyprian or Ambrose or Hilary or Augustine or Jerome), but I indicate where it is corrupt, issuing a warning where the translator nodded very badly and explaining anything complicated and crabbed.

If it is desirable that we should possess the Scriptures in as correct a form as possible, this labour of mine not only removes blemishes from Holy Writ but provides an obstacle to similar corruption in the future. If it is desirable that they should be rightly understood, I have opened more than six hundred passages which had not been understood before even by eminent divines. They confess this themselves, deny it they cannot. If it is desirable that the argumentative species of theology, which is almost over-dominant in our universities, should be joined with a knowledge of the sources, my work is specially conducive to this end. Thus no form of study suffers from these labours of mine, and all forms find them helpful. The reading of the Greek is the basis of my version everywhere, but I do not everywhere accept it; in other places I prefer our own, always pointing out where the orthodox Latin authorities and the Greeks agree or differ. Besides which, variant readings are not merely no obstacle to the study of Holy Scripture, they are a great help, as St Augustine himself avers. But nowhere is the degree of variation great enough to imperil the orthodox faith. In short, either I am simply blinded by love for my own work or it will contribute no

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33 Bombace] Cf Ep 865:2.
50 uncertain] Cf Ep 843:23n.
68 Augustine] Cf Ep 843:51n.

small advantage to sacred studies and no small glory to our Holy Father Leo in the future, when jealousy has subsided and men appreciate its value. This value will bear richer fruit and ripen earlier if it is blessed with the approval of the chief shepherd. Nor do I wish for his approval in any other terms than these, that he should declare my work acceptable to him on account of its value for sacred studies.

In return for my dedication I ask for no other reward. One man might expect a present, another might demand a benefice; for me, whose sole aim it was to be of use, it will seem recompense rich enough if I achieve the object for which I have undertaken all these nightly vigils. Your excellency will secure what I need with a couple of words, and thus will do what is pleasing to Christ himself and popular with all who wish to learn, especially welcome also to Froben, a man to whose printing-house the study of Holy Scriptures owes more than to any other. My book will be printed within the next three months; if the brief can be sent within that space of time, it can be printed at the beginning of the volume. I beg your Highness urgently to give me in this matter practical experience of your generosity, and I will ensure in return that the serried ranks of scholarship understand their debt to the name of Pucci. I send all my best wishes to his eminence my lord of Sion, whose greatness and good deeds will soon, I hope, be rewarded by Almighty God.

Farewell, and be indulgent, for I write this with my loins girded, being just about to go on board.

Basel, 26 August 1518

861 / To Osvaldus Myconius — Basel, 26 August 1518

This is the last letter to be included in the *Auctarium* (cf Ep 886:57n). Oswald Geisshüsler, called Myconius, of Lucerne (1488–1552), graduated from the University of Basel and was at this time master of the Grossmünster school at Zürich. Subsequently he joined the reformers and in 1532 succeeded Johannes Oecolampadius (Ep 224:30n) as chief pastor (antistes) and professor of theology in Basel. At that time Erasmus thought poorly of him; cf Allen Ep 2778:24–8.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND OSWALD, GREETING

Dearest friend, I was quite delighted to get your letter, and though I send a very brief answer, I am devoted to my dear Oswald, partly because he is so

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89 Sion] Cardinal Matthäus Schiner, who had for long been engaged in the business that brought Pucci to Switzerland; cf Ep 447:660n.

92 on board] See Ep 867 introduction.

fond of me, and partly because he is as close to Glareanus, who is already my friend on more than one count, as any Theseus or whatever closer there may be. Stick to it, my dear Oswald, and win glory in the field of literature for that Switzerland of yours, already so glorious in arms. The plague drives me hence – plague take it! Farewell.

Basel, 26 August 1518

862 / To Bonifacius Amerbach Basel, 31 August 1518

This is a letter of commendation for the *Lucubrationes* of Udalricus Zasius, a legal work to be published by Froben. Its main component was a treatise, 'De origine iuris,' in which Erasmus had taken an interest (cf Epp 376, 379, 632). On 8 September a specimen page was sent to Zasius together with the news about this preface by Erasmus (AK II Ep 625). In December the work was hastily printed (cf Ep 904:17–18; AK II Ep 642) and published. As a result there were many misprints, which Beatus Rhenanus blamed on the corrector, Lambertus Hollonius (cf Ep 904 introduction), and a sheet of errata had to be prepared (cf a letter from Beatus Rhenanus to Francesco Giulio Calvo in *Marquardi Gudii … epistolae* ed P. Burman, Utrecht 1697, Ep 62). Following the *Lucubrationes* of Zasius, this letter was reprinted in the *Epistolae ad diversos*.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO BONIFACIUS AMERBACH OF BASEL, A YOUNG MAN OF UNCOMMON LEARNING IN ALL BRANCHES OF STUDY, GREETING

How great a part it is of happiness, and the greatest part of gratitude, to recognize one's blessings! And so we must continually count our generation fortunate and thank the powers above, over and over again, through whose

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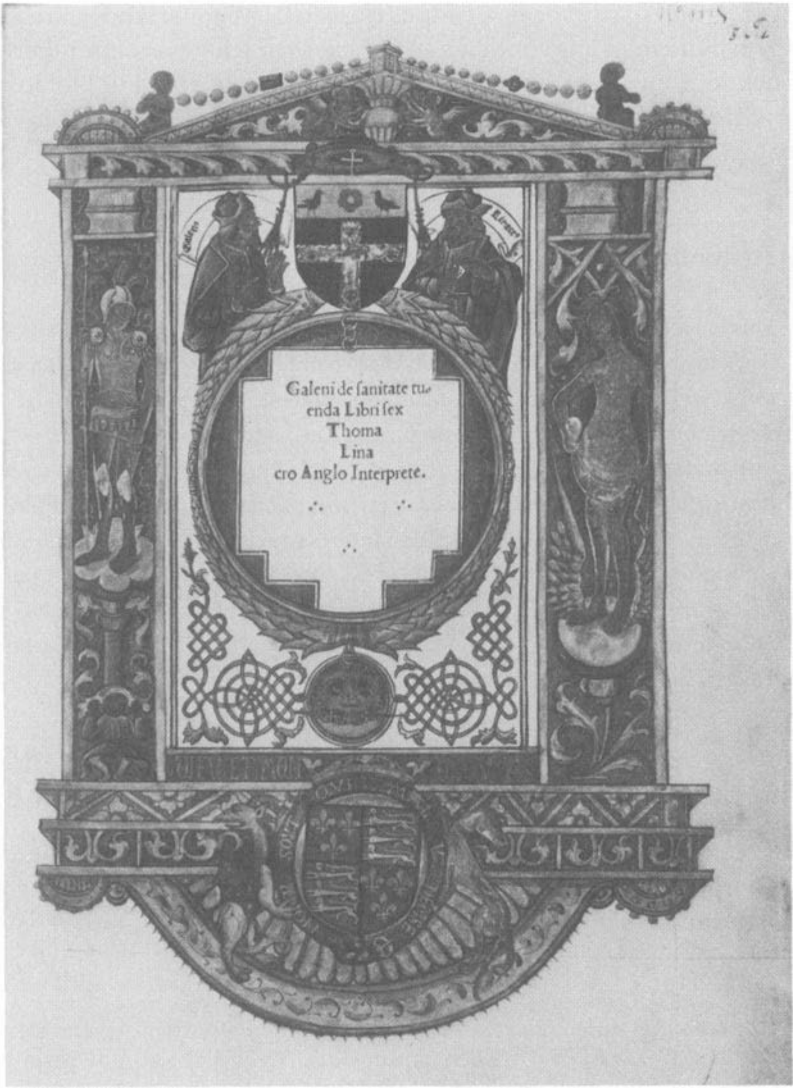
861

4 Glareanus] Henricus Glareanus and Myconius both attended the school in Rottweil (Swabia) under Michael Rubellus. They met again at Basel where Glareanus addressed an elegy to Myconius; cf E.F. Fritzsche *Glarean* (Frauenfeld 1890) 3, 11, 89.

5 any Theseus] The friendship of Theseus and Pirithous was proverbial in Antiquity.

7 plague] Justifying Erasmus' apprehensions (cf Epp 770 introduction, 803:9–11), there is evidence of sporadic outbreaks of the bubonic plague in the Rhine valley and adjacent regions during the second half of 1518. Still it would appear that the plague was no worse than in other years (cf Epp 860:12, 866:32, 867:67–72, 210–74, 881:8–9, 904:18–19). Myconius quoted this sentence when explaining that as a result of his hasty departure from Basel Erasmus had left a letter from Joachim Vadianus unanswered; cf W. Näf *Vadian* (St Gallen 1944–57) I 215.



Galeni de ſanitate tuenda
Libri ſex
Thoma
Lina
cro Anglo Interprete.

Galen *De sanitate tuenda* title page
This is the edition of Paris: Guillaume Le Rouge 1517;
representations of Galen and Linacre, the translator,
appear at top left and right respectively;
the shield between them is that of Cardinal Wolsey,
for whom this particular copy was so lavishly decorated
Reproduced by courtesy of the British Library Board

bounty those humane studies, which for so many centuries had been almost buried, now flourish once more the whole world over and are so prosperously multiplied. Eighty years ago, more or less, it was not only the professors of what Virgil (even in his own age, the high summer of learning and eloquence combined) calls the voiceless arts, that were inarticulate and tongue-tied; grammar itself, mistress of correctness in language, and rhetoric, the guide to abundance and brilliance of expression, lisped with a wretched, sorry sound, and the arts which had in old days been so well equipped with languages then spoke Latin only, and bad Latin at that. Thereafter, as noble studies slowly increased, Italy alone had the gift of self-expression, and even there no science used it except rhetoric. But now, in every nation in Christendom, all branches of study (under the favour of the Muses) marry useful learning with splendour of expression.

Medicine first learnt to speak in Italy through the efforts of Niccolò Leoniceno, an old man deserving of immortal fame; in France through Guillaume Cop of Basel. In Britain the efforts of Thomas Linacre have made Galen lately write such good Latin that he might be thought to write rather badly in his native Greek. He has made Aristotle too speak Latin, so well that, for all that he hails from Attica , he hardly seems to reach the same elegance in his own language; though of course before Linacre's time Argyropoulos among the Italians with George of Trebizond, Theodorus Gaza, Marsilio, and Pico, and in France Lefèvre d'Etaples, had made it clear that philosophy was by no means speechless. Then the laws of the empire have been restored successfully to their original elegance, and indeed to distinction in both Greek and Latin, by Guillaume Budé in France, and in Germany by a man without peer in every way, Udalricus Zasius, who has such rich fertility in the Roman tongue at his command that you would think the writer a second Ulpian, not a legal light of our own age.

Yet somehow, I know not how, equal success in this department still

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862

10 Virgil] *Aeneid* 12.397, referring to the medical arts

20 the efforts of] Cf Ep 541:60–2; for Leoniceno cf Ep 216A:21n; for Cop cf Ep 523; and for Linacre cf Ep 118:27n.

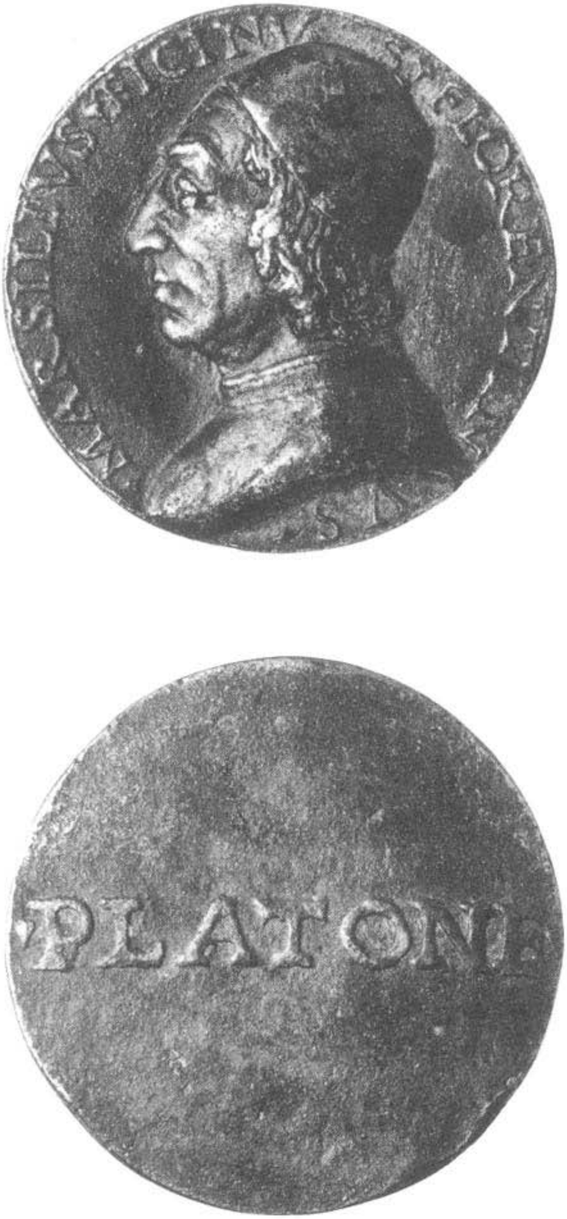
23 Galen] Cf Ep 755:32n.

24 Aristotle] Cf Ep 868:79n.

27 Argyropoulos ... Trebizond ... Gaza] Cf Epp 456:117n, 36:3n, 233:12n.

28 Marsilio ... Pico] Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), was the leading member of Cosimo de' Medici's Platonic academy at Careggi near Florence. Apart from his own works he translated Plato, Plotinus, and other philosophical texts. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (cf Ep 126:150n) was his pupil and friend.

34 Ulpian] Roman jurist, d 228; a major contributor to the Pandects


MARSILIVS FICINVS FLORENTINVS
PLATONI

Marsilio Ficino
Portrait medal in the manner of Niccolò Fiorentino,
made shortly before 1499
Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of
the British Museum

eludes the theologians, although there may be some with a keen desire to write well. I hope however that we shall soon see this profession, like the others, shake off the dust and reassert its ancient brilliance. Hitherto, those who wrote with some attempt at polish were excluded from the ranks of the learned, nor would the professionals deign to admit to their order anyone who had not mumbled the shameful stuff they talk themselves, without risking the infection of good literature at any point. It came so easy to say 'He's a grammarian, he's no philosopher' or 'He's a rhetorician, not a lawyer' or 'Style is his strong point and not theology.' But soon, if I am not mistaken, things will be very different: none will be admitted to the roll who do not reproduce these ancient fountain-heads of learning in language still more elegant than their own, nor will it be thought right for any man to lay claim to wisdom unless it is accompanied by eloquence, its handmaid whom St Augustine wishes never to leave her mistress' side.

Zasius' commentary I have run through rather than read, for it reached me just as I was ready for a journey. A taste of it gave me great satisfaction, and I do not doubt that I shall like the whole work still more when I have the opportunity to take my fill of such excellent fare. Pray encourage the author, my dear Bonifacius, not to keep us selfishly waiting for such glory, such profit, such enjoyment; unless you too are selfish, seeing that you have the advantage of enjoying Zasius' familiar society. Farewell.

Basel, 31 August 1518

863 / From Jakob Spiegel — Augsburg, 31 August 1518

This preface was printed in Erasmus Vitellius *Oratio in Augusten. conventu … habita* (Augsburg: J. Miller 1518).

Vitellius was the name taken by Erazm Ciołek of Cracow (d 1522), who was bishop of Płock from 1503, represented Sigismund I of Poland at the Diet of Augsburg (cf Ep 891), and on 20 August 1518 made the speech recommending the crusade on behalf of his king which was afterwards edited by Spiegel. Later in the year Maximilian I sent him to Rome, where he spent the rest of his life as Polish envoy.

The imperial secretary Jakob Spiegel (see Ep 323:13n) was perhaps anxious to secure Vitellius' support of Maximilian's diplomacy. Vitellius' speech is reprinted in Hutten *Opera* v 237–45. It is not easy to believe Spiegel's claim that he moved the audience to tears.

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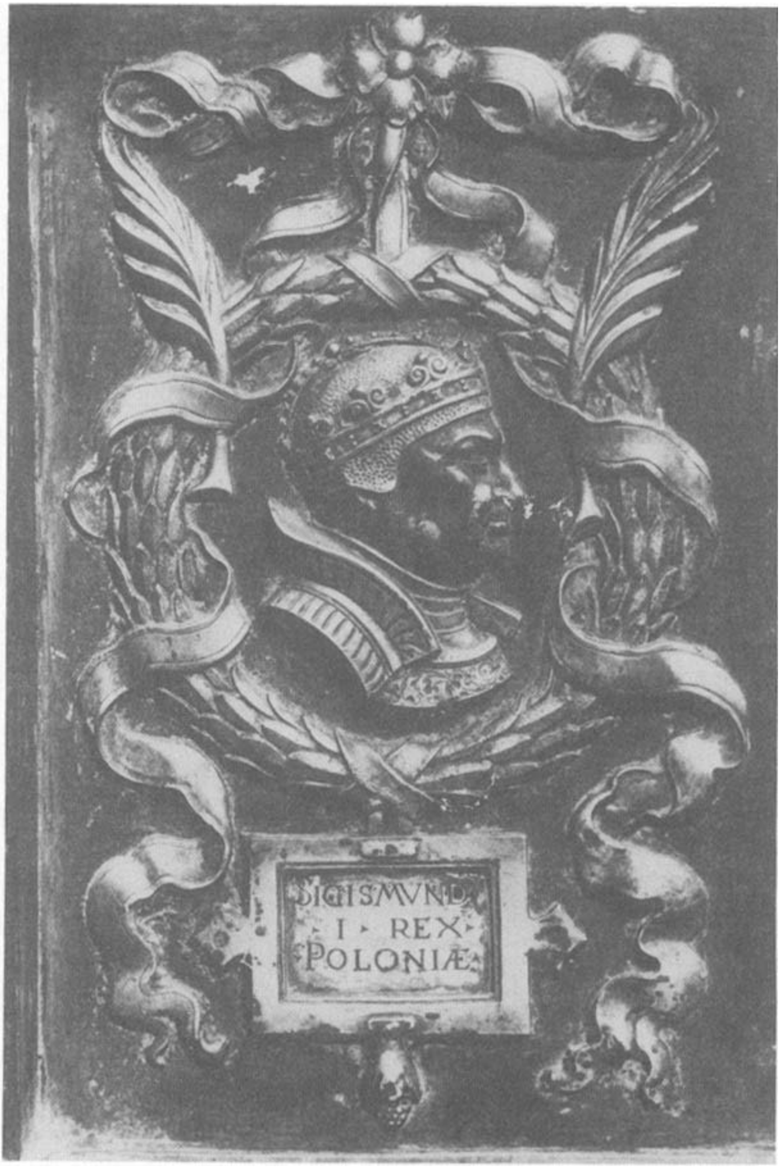
49 Augustine] Cf *De doctrina christiana* 4.5.7 (CC 32:120–1), quoting Cicero's *De inventione* 1.1.

50 Zasius' commentary] The *Lucubrationes*

51 journey] See Ep 867 introduction.


SIGISMVND
I · REX
POLONIÆ

Sigismund I of Poland
From a fragment of the Sigismund Chapel in the cathedral at Cracow;
made in Nürnberg by Melchior Baier after the design of Peter Flötner, c 1531–8
Panstowe Zbiory Sztuki na Wawelu, Krakow

TO THE CELEBRATED DOCTOR ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, LEADING SCHOLAR IN THE TWO ANCIENT TONGUES AND EMINENT THEOLOGIAN, FROM JAKOB SPIEGEL OF SÉLESTAT, SECRETARY TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY, GREETING

His invincible majesty Sigismund king of Poland, who not many years and months ago won a signal victory over the wagon-dwellers who call themselves Muscovites and the Scythians known as Tartars, having appointed as his envoy the right reverend Erasmus Vitellius, bishop of Płock (a man of the highest character, rare learning, and true Roman eloquence, who has a special claim on my attachment because he has the same name as yourself and frequently speaks of you with great respect), the bishop had his first audience (if I as a court official may use the courtier's word) before the emperor, all the electors of the Holy Roman Empire, and the other princes and magnates of Germany. He there spoke so eloquently and to such effect that the force of what he said pierced his auditors to the very heart and moved many of them to tears. In fact, as scholar and speaker alike all men of learning and eloquence yield him the palm. For there were present not a few elegant scholars and sensitive critics, the bishop of Trieste, Peutinger, Hutten, Bartolini, Spalatinus, and Stabius that all-round scholar, Heinrich Stromer the physician, and Lorenz Zoch the lawyer, chancellor of that most prosperous prince the cardinal of Mainz. And so, having obtained a copy of this most elegant speech in advance of everyone else, and knowing that learned men consider that it deserves a wide circulation and that everyone wishes to read it, I have had it printed and set your distinguished name at the head of it, to which all offerings of respect are rightly due. Pray give it a kindly reception; for I do not doubt that, if it moved its original audience to tears, those who read it will be still more deeply moved, and their hearts will be made the more ready to promote the good of Christendom.

My best wishes not only to you but to Beatus Rhenanus, who so well

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863

6 victory] The Polish-Lithuanian victory over the Russians in the battle of Orsza, 8 September 1514, led to an understanding with Maximilian I on the questions of the Teutonic order and the Hungarian succession.

18 Trieste] Pietro Bonomo (d 1546), bishop of Trieste since 1502, was a faithful and honoured servant to the Hapsburg crown; see DBI.

18 Peutinger, Hutten] See Epp 318:3n, 365 introduction.

19 Bartolini] Cf Ep 547.

19 Spalatinus ... Stabius ... Stromer] See Epp 501 introduction, 409:28n, 578 introduction.

20 Zoch] Lorenz Zoch (b 1477) was chancellor of Magdeburg under Albert of Brandenburg (cf Ep 661 introduction) until his conversion to Lutheranism.

deserves his name, and whom I bear in my heart. I wish for you both the longest possible thread of life, that good literature, and sacred literature especially, may flourish once again with prospects daily more and more auspicious. Hutten, being accounted nothing by the blear-eyed admirers of our popular productions, has produced a nothing, the work of Nobody, which I should be happy to see you pass to our friend Froben for a reprint, if you agree. I will send you his dialogue on life at court, as soon as it appears. Once more best wishes.

From Augsburg, 31 August in the year of the Incarnation 1518

864 / From Leo X — Rome, 10 September 1518

For some time Erasmus had wished for some formal expression of papal approval for his New Testament (cf Epp 832:2–3; 835 introduction). As work on the new edition advanced he made a concerted effort to obtain a brief, approaching the legate Antonio Pucci (Ep 860), cardinals Raffaele Riario and Domenico Grimani (cf Epp 860:33, 865:22), and his friend Paolo Bombace. The result was this brief, composed and given a putative date by Bombace, and approved by Leo X late in September (cf Ep 865). The importance Erasmus attached to it can be gathered from the profuse thanks he sent Bombace (Ep 905). It was printed on the reverse of the title page of Froben's text volume (cf LB IX 751D–E; Ep 885:5–6).

From the publication of the *Novum instrumentum* (February 1516) Erasmus had expressed dissatisfaction with his work, and he lost little time in gathering notes in preparation for a revision (cf Ep 809:70n). He added steadily to these during many trips and moves in 1516 and early 1517 (cf *Opuscula* 238–41), and after he settled in Louvain (July 1517), in a congenial atmosphere, the New Testament absorbed the major part of his energies (cf the indexes of CWE 5 and 6). He consulted additional manuscripts and endeavoured to enlist the help of many scholar friends such as Fisher (cf Ep 784), Colet (cf Ep 825), Latimer (cf Ep

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34 Nobody] Using the ironical twist on which the poem itself is based, Spiegel refers to Hutten's *Nemo* (cf Ep 365:30n) which proved extremely popular. One of the prefaces to the revised second version is dated from Augsburg, 24 August 1518. At least five editions of 1518 are known; with the colophon date of September 1518 Froben twice reprinted the earlier edition of J. Miller, Augsburg, and a third Froben edition is dated January 1519. Martens printed it in October 1518 (NK 1149). There are passing references to Erasmus in both prefaces; cf Hutten *Opera* I 21*–23*, Ep 85, III 107–18, and for Erasmus' negative reaction Ep 961:32–4.

36 dialogue] *Aula, dialogus* ([Augsburg]: S. Grimm and M. Wirsung 17 September 1518)

886:9n), Tunstall (cf Ep 597:18–20), Grocyn, Wentford (cf Epp 772, 833), and Glareanus (cf Ep 707:20–3). Most of them did make suggestions, while Budé saw his offer of assistance rejected (cf Epp 493 postscript, 531:596–617). Amid much approval and encouragement, there was also considerable criticism, much of it unsolicited. The objections of Jacques Lefèvre (cf Ep 597:37n, 44n), Edward Lee (cf Ep 765 introduction), and Johann Eck (cf Ep 769), in particular, caused Erasmus great anxiety. The need to answer his critics did not, however, cause him to abandon the revolutionary principles on which the first edition had been based. On the contrary, of the five editions published in his lifetime, the second was probably the most provocative (cf Ep 809:73–6).

At Basel Erasmus personally watched over the composition of the revised *Annotationes*. This second volume of Froben's edition was ready for printing when he left Basel to return to Louvain (the date in the colophon, p 548, is 23 August 1518). The first volume, containing the text of the New Testament, was undertaken next. To help with the proof-reading in his absence, Erasmus left his *famulus* Jacobus Nepos in Basel, and, lacking confidence in him, subsequently sent another young scholar from Louvain (cf Epp 885:2n, 886:28–30). In Louvain Erasmus continued to revise the text and on 22 October he sent Froben the last parts (cf Epp 867:82–3, 253–4, 885:2–3). In December the Epistles of Paul were being printed (cf Ep 904:15–16), and the date of 1518 appears in the first colophon, p 564, although distribution did not begin before the middle of March (cf Epp 950:45n, 955, 961:74–5; Luther w *Briefwechsel* I Ep 146). According to Erasmus the 1516 edition had exceeded 1200 copies (cf *Opuscula* 238–9), and after the new edition was published he wrote of a total of 3300 copies in print (cf LB IX 280D). Whether he included the first edition in this figure is not clear, but even if he did, an impression of close to 2000 copies of an expensive work partly in Greek, running to over 1250 pages in folio divided into two volumes, is remarkable by the standards of the time. See further Epp 373, 384 introductions; A. Bludau *Die beiden ersten Erasmus-Ausgaben des Neuen Testaments und ihre Gegner* (Freiburg 1902); B.M. Metzger *The Text of the New Testament* 2nd ed (Oxford 1968) 98–103.

TO OUR BELOVED SON ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, DOCTOR OF DIVINITY, FROM POPE LEO X

Our beloved son, greeting and apostolic benediction. We derived great pleasure from the studies on the New Testament which you published some time ago, not so much because they were dedicated to us as for the new and exceptional learning by which they were distinguished and which earned them a chorus of praise from the world of scholars. The news that you had lately revised them, and enriched and clarified them by the addition of numerous annotations, gave us no little satisfaction; for we inferred from the first edition, which used to seem a most finished performance, what this new one would be, and how much it would benefit all who have at heart the progress of theology and of our orthodox faith. Go forward then in this same spirit: work for the public good, and do all you can to bring so religious an undertaking into the light of day, for you will receive from God himself a worthy reward for all your labours, from us the commendation you deserve, and from all Christ's faithful people lasting renown.

Given at Rome at St Peter's under the ring of the Fisherman, on the tenth day of September 1518, being the sixth year of our Pontificate.

Evangelista

865 / From Paolo Bombace Rome, 1 October 1518

This letter was answered by Ep 905 and first printed in the *Farrago*.

PAOLO BOMBACE TO ERASMUS, GREETING

Your letter dated 18 August reached me at last on 12 September and gave me such pleasure that I could have enjoyed nothing more, being so bound to you by some sort of fate that even the mention of your familiar name is a refreshment, much more the appearance of something drawn from your heart and mind. This I often desire but would always be too shy to ask for, in fear that I might waste your time and 'sin against the public good,' as Horace puts it. And how much you have done, in my opinion, for the public good, not merely with untiring energy but hitherto with success, I would rather praise before other men than recount to you. But you know me inside out and in the buff; let me not give the impression of trying to convince you at length of something you believe already and even know well to be true; so I turn to your letter.

So, with invitations from kings and princes on every hand, you have rejected and thought nothing of them all and chosen to betake yourself to Basel for the reprinting of the New Testament? This does not surprise me, for I know my Erasmus, and you have never set a high value on anything compared with your duty to the cause of learning. How I wish you had

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864

19 Evangelista] Evangelista Tarasconio of Parma, papal secretary under Leo X and Clement VII; see Pastor VIII 155n.

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2 letter] See Epp 860:32–3, 864 introduction.

7 Horace] *Epistles* 2.1.3

11 in the buff] Persius 3.30; *Adagia* I ix 89

done this while I was still in your part of the world! I should have been the happiest man alive, and Rome itself could not have called me back so easily. To secure a brief that might serve as a helpful endorsement of your work, the person to ask was not San Giorgio or San Marco, one of whom has been away from the city for some time and the other went away a few days ago for his autumn holiday, while my master, the cardinal of the Santi Quattro, an outstanding patron of all men of letters and a decisive voice in all such things, is more well disposed to you than to anyone. When I told him what you wanted, he approved a draft brief composed by me and had it copied on parchment and sent to Pope Leo, who had left the city two days before, to be examined and, unless he did not like it, sealed.

But here see how your fate intervened, unless you would rather say mine. A young classical scholar called Silvius, a Frenchman, much devoted to you and he made no secret of it, was going to have an audience of the pope in person, with a letter of introduction from my cardinal, and said he would be coming back next day. Not expecting to find anyone more suitable to be entrusted with such business, I committed the brief to him and gave him a letter to his holiness' secretary, in which I asked him in the cardinal's name to seal the brief and send it back at once by this Silvius aforesaid. Silvius in any case had a touch of fever and was in poor health and, being prevented by some mishap, I suspect, when actually on his way, he sent the brief and the letter on ahead to the secretary. He in his turn wasted no time but gave the brief and the letter of recommendation to his holiness forthwith. When he had looked at the brief and signed it and had read through the letter, he gave instructions for the man it recommended to be sent for; and when he was nowhere to be found, they were to look for him most carefully. But so far they have been unable to find him anywhere. I had expected the whole business to be finished in a very few days, and when several had elapsed

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22 San Giorgio or San Marco] Cardinals Riario (cf Ep 607:17n) and Grimani; cf Epp 860:32–3, 864 introduction.

24 cardinal of the Santi Quattro] Lorenzo Pucci

28 left the city] He left Rome which was infested with malaria on 11 September, according to M. Sanudo *Diarii* (Venice 1879–1903) xxvi 38.

31 Silvius] He is unidentified. In Ep 905 Erasmus wondered whether he might have been Christophe de Longueil. Before this letter was available in print, Longueil visited Erasmus in 1519 and apparently tried to clear his name. Longueil's story was suddenly recalled by Erasmus in 1533 and retold with distortions. Silvius had then become the assumed name of a fugitive monk, an impostor exhibiting faked letters from Erasmus; cf Allen Epp 2798:49–58, 2874:157–87.

36 secretary] Cf Ep 864:19n.

and I saw nothing happen, I wrote to the secretary again, accusing him of negligence and even of deliberate malice for sending countless briefs to the city almost hour by hour and holding up Erasmus' brief for so long. He replied at length, saying that the place of concealment of my messenger, of which I spoke, is still uncertain, and assuring me that the brief had been returned by some unspecified courier; and when after long search it could not be found anywhere, I arranged to send him another like it. Unless this is intercepted by some fresh evil spirit, it will reach you eventually.

Such is the somewhat long and tedious history of your brief; and do not be surprised at the date, for I chose to date it from Rome rather than anywhere else to make it more impressive. I am delighted that the letter in which you answered mine should have been printed, so that my reputation will have gone up, provided my letter is not printed with it, for, as I can well remember, it hardly deserved to be read once by a friend and compared with any common piece, let alone with an excellent letter from you. Lascaris is now in France, and so I could not arrange a meeting. If I have any opportunity to see such a learned man as you describe, I shall carry out your wishes and do him a good turn at the same time. I was turned away from a career in scholarship not so much by my own inclination or the prospects of a better position in life, as you suspect; it was the vagaries of chance carried me off, to which we owe most things both good and bad. The two Boerios are in Rome and return your greetings. Bernardo contracted a quartan fever, but not a very severe one; he was threatening to depart for Genoa. Pucci the legate has left your part of the world by now, I do not doubt, and is making his way to Rome; and I am therefore sending the brief itself not to him but to the protonotary Caracciolo, the pope's envoy to the emperor, whom I expect to find neither uncivil nor inefficient in sending it straight on to you. Farewell, dear Erasmus, and give my greetings to Beatus and the Amerbachs and the other good scholars in those parts.

Rome, from the apostolic palace, 1 October 1518

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57 the letter] Ep 855. Bombace had not yet seen the *Auctarium*, which also contained his own letter, Ep 729.

61 Lascaris] In Ep 836 Erasmus had written to Johannes Lascaris in search of a Greek professor for the Collegium Trilingue at Louvain. Clearly he had done the same in his letter to Bombace.

67 Boerios] Giovanni and Bernardo, the sons of Giovanni Battista Boerio, physician to Henry VIII; cf Ep 267 introduction.

69 Pucci] See Ep 860 introduction.

72 Caracciolo] Marino Caracciolo of Naples (1469–1538), named protonotary and nuncio to the imperial court in 1517, afterwards cardinal and governor of Milan. He left for Germany in March 1518 and there attended the Diet of Augsburg together with Cajetanus; see Ep 891:26n.

866 / From Adolf Eichholz — Cologne, 6 October 1518

The autograph of this letter is in the University Library in Wrocław, MS Rehdiger 254, f 56 (Ep 61).

Adolf Eichholz of Cologne (d 1563) went to Orléans to study law in 1515 under Jean Pyrrhus d'Angleberme and in 1517 presided over the German 'nation.' Returning to Cologne in April or May 1518, he had hoped to visit Erasmus in Louvain but learnt from Pieter Gillis in Antwerp that he had left for Basel. So Eichholz had to put his business down in writing. At Cologne he was canon of St Mariengraden and in 1521 received a legal doctorate and c 1535 was named professor of canon law; cf Epp 810 introduction, 819; AK III Ep 1136.

Greeting. Pray, dear Erasmus, most gifted of all men of letters, do not be surprised or (as I fear you may be) indignant if I address a letter to you at what is perhaps such an inconvenient moment. I have to do it for the sake of one of your pupils, Jean Pyrrhus d'Angleberme, a professor in Orléans, where he was lately for three years my teacher and a good teacher. I have set out his business more fully for your kind attention in another letter attached to this one. I have already written three letters on this subject, but so far, I regret to say, in vain. The first went with Pieter Gillis, secretary of the city of Antwerp, an excellent scholar, together with letters from Budé and others, and that was in the month of May last past; then the letter which you see enclosed in this one, sent last September to the Frankfurt fair, to which I greatly hoped you would be coming; and now for the third and last time in this month of October. So like the kind and honourable man you are, much respected Erasmus, please not only to receive this in your usual straightforward way but read it through for the sake of the contents; and reply in a very short note, if you please (but I do very strongly urge you to), not that I have done anything to deserve it, I am sorry to say, but because the need to correct the work and the delay in doing so necessitate it. If you are willing to do this, as I am sure you are, I will send the short work in question, if this is possible for you, to that same Pieter Gillis; for he, I am quite sure, will send it to you at

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866

4 Angleberme] In 1500 Erasmus had tutored him in Paris; cf Ep 140:37–8.

6 business] From lines 17–19 it appears that Erasmus was asked to revise one of Angleberme's writings. Several were published between 1518 and 1520, among them *Militia Francorum regum* (Paris: J. Bade 21 February 1518 = 1519 new style?). In the title of an enlarged and revised edition of his works (Milan: A. Minutianus 1520) earlier French editions were accused of negligence; cf *Index Aureliensis* (Baden-Baden 1965–) I no 105.815.

Louvain as soon as he can. I beg you, dear Erasmus, in answer to this and all my other foolish letters do let me have, as I say, some kind of brief note when you conveniently can, addressed to me in Cologne, either at the Fat Hen bookshop or at the Coney. You will do me, I solemnly assure you, a very great service, although it is far beyond any claim I may have on you.

I hear you made a rapid survey of Cologne from the White Horse inn in the Haymarket. I was bitterly disappointed not to be able to speak to you about all this in person. I had also made plans long ago that the city council of Cologne should have given a public reception in your honour, as your high standing and your great eminence deserve, though I quite agree that far more distinguished offerings would properly be your due.

I am convinced it was only the virulence of the plague that made you leave so soon. I hope you will one day come back by way of Cologne; and then I shall try with all my might to have a little speech with you, particularly in company with Hermann, count of Neuenahr, and Hermannus Buschius, and Johannes Caesarius, who is now living at Münster, all my special friends. Until then, I remain entirely devoted to you, my supreme Maecenas and patron deity, and ask for your continuing good will. Farewell O greatest and most illustrious ornament of the whole world of letters, and above all the leading light and glory of the whole of Germany.

Cologne, 6 October 1518

Sincerely yours, Adolf Eichholz of Cologne licentiate in canon law

To the right excellent and learned Doctor Erasmus of Rotterdam, the leading theologian in the field of Scripture, his most honoured master. In Louvain

867 / To Beatus Rhenanus Louvain, [first half of October] 1518

This letter gives an elaborate account of Erasmus' journey from Basel to Louvain and of the serious illness he contracted while approaching the

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23 Fat Hen] 'Unter Fettenhennen,' the bookstore of the Birckmann brothers, which served as a name for the whole street. The house 'zum Hasen' ('the Coney') was adjacent; cf J. Benzing *Die Buchdrucker des* 16. *und* 17. *Jahrhunderts im deutschen Sprachgebiet* (Wiesbaden 1963) 224–5; H. Keussen *Topographie der Stadt Köln im Mittelalter* (Bonn 1910) I 312.

26 White Horse] No doubt the inn 'zum Ross' on the Rheingasse, just off the Heumarkt; cf Keussen I 70.

32 plague] Cf Ep 861:7n.

35 Neuenahr] See Epp 442 introduction, 867:79–88.

35 Buschius] See Ep 830 introduction.

36 Caesarius] See Ep 374 introduction.

Netherlands. It was composed in part as he lay recovering in the house of his friend, the printer Dirk Martens. After some four weeks (line 266) he returned to the College of the Lily by 15 October and resumed his normal correspondence with the pressing Ep 869. A week later the last pages of the revised *New Testament* were ready for dispatch (cf lines 83, 254, Ep 885). The young men who took them to Basel were also given Epp 877–85 for delivery to various friends along their way and an unsealed copy of this letter to be shown at each stop (cf Epp 877:36–7, 878:9–11). Thereafter the letter was printed in the *Farrago*.

With the usual reservations about the precision of such statements, the chronology of Erasmus' journey can be reconstructed as follows:

September	
c 3–4	by boat from Basel to Strasbourg; dinner at Breisach; supper and night quarters in a miserable village
c 4	arrival in Strasbourg before dinner; the day spent there and probably also the night
c 5–6	on horseback to Speyer (line 162)
c 7–8	at Speyer
c 9	by carriage to Worms and Mainz
c 10	by boat to Boppard and Koblenz
c 11–12	by boat to Bonn and Cologne; after some hours in Cologne on horseback to Bedburg
12–c 17	at Bedburg with Neuenahr
c 17	by carriage to Aachen
c 18–19	at Aachen
c 19	on horseback to Maastricht and Tongeren
c 20	to St Truiden, partly by carriage and partly on horseback
c 21	by carriage to Tienen and Louvain

ERASMUS TO HIS DEAR RHENANUS, GREETING

Here, my dear Beatus, is the whole tragicomedy of my travels. I was still feeble and rather listless, as you know, when I was leaving Basel – for I had not yet made my peace with the climate after lying low for so long indoors – and distracted by continuous toil as well. The boat was not unpleasant, except that around midday the sun was hot and somewhat trying. We dined at Breisach, and never have I had a more unpleasant dinner. The stench was terrible, the flies worse than the stench. We sat more than half an hour at table waiting idly while (if you please) they got their own dinner ready.

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867

7 Breisach] On the Rhine, between Freiburg and Colmar

Eventually nothing was set on the table that one could possibly eat: dirty pease porridge, lumps of meat, sausage réchauffé more than once – it was simply revolting. I did not go and see Gallinarius. Someone told me he had a fever and added a charming story: that that Minorite theologian with whom I had had an argument over echeities had pawned communion vessels in his own name. There's a nice Scotist refinement for you! At nightfall we were cast ashore at some dreary village whose name I did not choose to inquire, nor would I willingly write it if I knew. That place was nearly the death of me. We had supper in a parlour of no great size with a stove, more than sixty of us I should think, the dregs of the human race, and that at ten o'clock. The smell! The noise! Especially when they were already heated with wine. But I had to sit there and take my timing from them.

In the morning while it was still quite dark we were roused from our blankets by the shouts of the shipmen. Supperless and sleepless I went on board. Strasbourg we reached before dinner, about nine o'clock, and there I was more agreeably entertained, especially as Schürer supplied the wine. Some part of the society were already there, and soon they all came to greet me, but no one taking more trouble than Gerbel. Gebwiler and Rudolfinger would not let me pay anything, a kindness which in them was nothing new. From there we went on to Speyer on horseback, nor did we espy the ghost of a soldier anywhere, though atrocious rumours were abroad. My English horse simply gave up and hardly got as far as Speyer; that miscreant of a smith had done him so badly that both his ears are singed with hot metal. At Speyer I slipped away from the inn and took refuge with my friend Maternus, who lived nearby. There I was put up for two days very pleasantly and courteously by the dean, who is a learned and civilized man. There by a happy chance I found Hermannus Buschius.

From there I went by carriage to Worms and on again to Mainz. In the

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12 Gallinarius] Johannes Gallinarius (cf Ep 305:213n) was then parish priest at Breisach.

14 echeities] Cf *Moria* (ASD IV-3 144, 148) speaking of 'quidditates,' 'ecceitates' – 'verbal portents dreamed up by recent theologians.' No more is known about the Minorite, but cf for a similar opponent Epp 557, 561.

21 take my timing] Erasmus refers, as he frequently does elsewhere, to the clepsydra or water-clock used in Athenian law courts; cf the colloquy 'Diversoria' (first published in August 1523; ASD I-3 337), which may well embody reminiscences of this journey; *Adagia* I iv 73.

25 Schürer] Matthias Schürer, the Strasbourg printer; see Epp 224:49n, 883:8. For other members of the Strasbourg literary society cf Ep 302.

30 English horse] See Ep 785:51n.

34 Maternus] Hatten, the vicar of Speyer cathedral. The dean of the cathedral since 1517 was Thomas Truchsess. For both cf Ep 355.

same conveyance there happened to be by chance one of the emperor's secretaries, by name Ulrich Varnbüler (as who should say Brackenbury). He was incredibly kind – did things for me throughout the journey, and furthermore at Mainz would not let me go to the inn but carried me off to the house of one of the canons and gave me his company to the ship when I left. The boat-journey was not unpleasant, thanks to the good weather, except that it took rather a long time; the sailors saw to that. Besides which the stench of the horses was offensive. The first day I had out of mere kindness the company of Johannes Longicampianus, who lectured some time ago at Louvain, and of some lawyer who was a friend of his. There was also a man from Westphalia, a Father Johann, canon of St Victor's outside Mainz, a most agreeable and cheerful person.

When we put in at Boppard and while the boat was being examined we were stretching our legs on the bank when someone recognized me and pointed me out to the customs officer: 'Behold the man,' he said. The officer's name is Christopher (I suppose) Cinicampius, commonly called Eschenfelder. I cannot tell you how delighted the man was. He carried me off to his house. On his desk all among the customs forms lay the works of Erasmus! He cried out on his good fortune, called for his children, his wife, and all his friends. Meanwhile, as the shipmen were loudly protesting, he sent them two flagons of wine, and when there were more protests replied with two more, promising that the man who had brought him such a distinguished guest should be excused the toll on his return. From here we were accompanied out of kindness as far as Koblenz by Dr Johann Flaming, the warden of a house of nuns there, a man of angelic innocence,

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39 Varnbüler] Ulrich Varnbüler of St Gallen (1474–1545) was head of the chancery of the imperial court *(Reichskammergericht)* at Speyer.

42 one of the canons] See Ep 880 introduction.

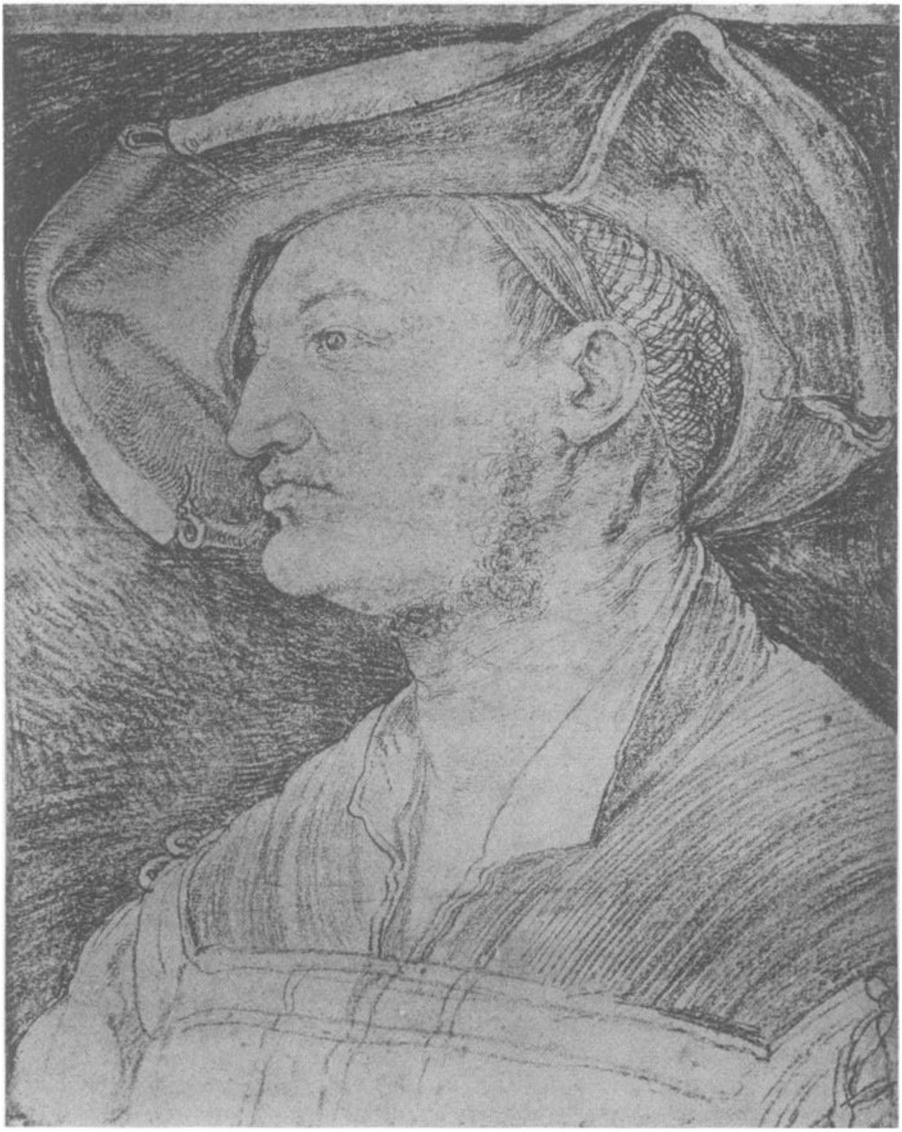
46 Longicampianus] For him and his lawyer friend see Ep 881.

48 Johann] According to information kindly provided by Professor A. Ph. Brück, diocesan archivist at Mainz, there were eighteen prebends at St Victor's. In 1518 five were held by canons named Johann (J. Reuss senior, 1505–41; J. Terlang, 1504–25; J. Vincenz von Bicken, 1514–51; J. Vonhoff, 1510–43; J. Beuren, 1509–24). Unfortunately none has so far been identified as a member of a Westphalian family.

50 Boppard] On the Rhine, at the border of the principality of Trier, eight miles south of Koblenz.

54 Eschenfelder] See Ep 879.

62 Flaming] Johann Flaming was a poet and a friend of Helius Eobanus, who visited him in Boppard on his way to see Erasmus (cf Ep 870 introduction). Apparently Flaming was still living there in 1528; cf Ep 2071.



Ulrich Varnbüler
Drawing in chalk by Albrecht Dürer,
for the woodcut dated 1522
Albertina, Vienna

sound and sober judgment, and uncommon learning. At Koblenz Dr Matthias, the bishop's official, took me to his house – a young man but mature in his ways, a careful and experienced Latin scholar and a first-class lawyer. There I had a cheerful supper.

At Bonn the canon left us, to avoid the city of Cologne, which I would gladly have avoided myself, but my servant had gone on ahead there with the horses, and there was no one reliable in the boat to whom I could have entrusted the task of recalling my man, nor did I trust the sailors. In the morning therefore before six o'clock we reached Cologne, on Sunday, the weather being now most oppressive. I entered an inn and requested the host's servants to hire a carriage and pair, ordering food to be ready by ten o'clock. Then I heard mass. Dinner was late. I had no luck with the carriage. I attempted to hire a horse, for my own were useless. No luck. I perceived what it was: they were determined I should stay there. I gave orders at once to harness my own horses and put one of my valises on one of them; the other I entrusted to mine host, and so on my lame horse I made the best of my way towards the count of Neuenahr. It is about five hours' journey. He was at Bedburg.

With him I spent five delightful days, in such tranquillity and comfort that I finished a good part of my revision while I was there, for I had brought that part of the New Testament with me. My dear Beatus, I wish you knew that man! He is quite young, but of rare wisdom, more than you would find in an old man; says little, but, as Homer remarks of Menelaus, speaks right fluently, or rather right intelligently; learned without ostentation in more than one field of study; a most open-hearted character and made for friendship. I was already recovered and getting a little strength; I was by now well pleased with my progress and looking forward to being in good

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64 Matthias] Matthias von Saarburg (d 1539) was the official of the archbishop of Trier at Koblenz in 1518 and from 1527 at Trier. He also became dean of St Simeon at Trier and was Erasmus' eager host again in November 1521; cf Ep 880.

67 canon] Johann (of line 48) avoided Cologne because of the plague (cf Ep 861:7n), it seems. A month later so did Eobanus, according to his *Hodoeporicon;* cf Krause *Eobanus* I 292.

68 servant] Probably Hovius; cf line 189.

71 Sunday] Only 12 September is possible, since Erasmus was still at Basel on 31 August (cf Ep 862) and probably on 1 September too; cf Epp 869:3–4, 886:42–3.

72 inn] Cf Ep 866:26.

77 the other] For shipment by water via Antwerp; cf Epp 877:41–2, 878:6.

80 Bedburg] Sixteen miles west of Cologne; the large castle owned by Neuenahr is still a landmark.

83 New Testament] See Ep 867 introduction.

85 Homer] *Iliad* 3.214

case for a visit to the bishop of Liège and a lively return to my friends in Brabant. The dinners, the parties of welcome, the long talks I was promising myself! I had decided, if we should have a mild autumn, to go to England and take up the offers the king had so often made me. But how deceptive are the hopes of mortal men! How sudden and unforeseen the changes in human affairs! From all these dreams of felicity I was plunged headlong into utter disaster.

A carriage and pair had already been hired for next day. The count, reluctant to bid me farewell the night before, announced that he would come and see me in the morning before I left. That night a kind of violent storm of wind arose, which had preceded likewise the day before. None the less I got up after midnight to scribble something for the count, and when seven o'clock came and he still did not appear, I told them to wake him. He came and in his usual shy way asked whether I was determined to leave in such unsuitable weather; he did not think I should be safe. Then, my dear Beatus, some Jupiter, some evil genius robbed me not of half my wits, as Hesiod has it, but of my entire senses, for half my senses he had removed already when I entrusted myself to Cologne. I only wish he had warned his friend more emphatically or I had been more receptive of his shy but most friendly warnings. Fate rapt me away; for how else can I put it? I climbed into an open carriage, with a wind blowing 'such as upon the lofty mountain-tops / Splinters the swaying oaks.' It was a south wind but breathed pure pestilence. I thought myself well protected by my wrappings, but the force of that wind went through everything. Towards nightfall it was succeeded by a fine rain more pestilent than the wind that brought it. I reached Aachen exhausted by the shaking of the carriage, which was such a burden to me on the rocky pavement of the road that a badly foundered horse would have been a softer ride. Here one of the canons, to whom I had an introduction

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90 Liège] In response to an invitation from the bishop, Erard de la Marck, conveyed in Ep 746. By the time Ep 916 was written they had finally met.

92 England] Cf Ep 855:32n.

105 Hesiod] A mingled memory of Hesiod *Scutum* 149 and Homer *Odyssey* 17.322; cf Allen's note.

110 'such as ... swaying oaks'] Horace *Epodes* 10.7–8

117 one of the canons] Perhaps Johann Schoenraid (or Schoenrode etc, d 1541), who was canon and before 1529 dean (cf below lines 130–1; Ep 972:33; J. Strange *Genealogie der Herren und Freiherren von Bongart*, Cologne 1866, 18). Schoenraid may conceivably have been the canon in whose house Erasmus forgot his sword and who was said to have gone to Rome shortly thereafter (cf Ep 904:7–10). His family had connections with the German college of Santa Maria dell'Anima, where he had himself been registered in 1512; cf *Liber*

from the count, swept me away from the inn to the precentor's house. There I found some of the canons at their usual potations. A very slender dinner had made me hungry, but in their company at that hour there was nothing but carp, and that cold. I ate my fill, and we sat drinking till late; but I made my excuses and went off to bed, having slept very little the night before.

Next day I was carried off to the vice-provost's house, for it was his turn in the rotation. There was no fish there except eels (the weather being at fault, for otherwise he keeps a splendid table), so I ate my fill of a sort of fish they hang up to harden in the wind, which, from the wooden batten with which it is pounded, the Germans call stockfisch; for normally I rather like it, but I soon discovered that some of this was still raw. After dinner, as the weather was still perfectly pestilential, I retired to the inn and ordered them to get the fire going properly. That same canon, a man of much courtesy, talked with me for about an hour and a half. Meanwhile my stomach began to give trouble; and as it persisted, I sent him away and retired to the latrine for a good riddance. And before I had taken all the load off my stomach I put my finger down my throat once or twice and up came that raw fish, nor did I throw up anything else but that. Once I had been sick I lay down, not so much sleeping as lying quiet with no headache and no pain anywhere. After that, having made an agreement with the driver about my baggage I was again invited to their evening potations. I begged to be excused, without success. I knew my stomach would take nothing except a little warm gruel, for the same thing had happened at Basel: one night, when I had an attack of the phlegm coming on and could not bear the pain in my stomach, I had relieved it in the same way, and it was a month before my digestion could come to terms again with any food. This time we were very splendidly done by, but it was no use to me. When I had comforted my stomach with a little soup, I set off home; for I was sleeping at the precentor's. I went out, and my frame with my empty stomach was shaken to its very core by the weather that night. A dreadful night it was.

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confraternitatis B. Marie de Anima Teutonicorum de Urbe ed C. Jänig (Rome 1875) 124. The eager conveyor is called 'dean' in Ep 1170. The same letter shows that the canons of Aachen were far from pleased with the publicity they had received through the publication of these lines in the *Farrago* of 1519. Erasmus changed them when the letter reappeared in the *Epistolae ad diversos* of 1521. Schoenraid, however, remained a good friend; see Ep 2130.

118 precentor] Johann Sudermann, d c 1537

123 vice-provost] Werner Huyn van Amstenrade was vice-provost of St Mary's at Aachen from 1517 and died in 1534; see O. R. Redlich in *Zeitschrift des Bergischen Geschichtsvereins* 41 (1908) 170, 177.

124 rotation] Cf Allen Ep 1170:33–7.

Next morning again I took a little mulled ale with a few scraps of bread and mounted my horse, which was sickly and lame, and so all the more uncomfortable to ride. I had already been reduced to such a state that it was a better plan to keep warm in bed than to sit on a horse. But nothing is more uncivilized or dreary or barren than that country, such is the fecklessness of the inhabitants; so I was the more glad to get away. The danger of robbers – which was very great in those parts – or at least the fear of them was driven out by the distress of my illness.

Already, while I was still in Basel, in the course of scratching the parts adjacent to my groin (as my custom is) to provoke a movement of the bowels, I had scratched rather too hard and broken the surface of the skin under my left hip with my finger-nail. The same happened in my right groin, but from that there was no pain and no soreness. The lesion under my left hip was made a little sore by the two days' riding that took me from Strasbourg to Speyer, but to the extent that I only felt it if I pressed on it with too much force. This trouble was so much aggravated by this last ride of mine, since I was resting on the horse in just that spot, that the whole area became inflamed. Besides which the place in my left groin swelled slightly, but with a swelling that could be moved easily under the skin, and not enough to hurt much. Besides this, at the top of my left groin a sort of hard lump came up and gradually increased, but there was no pain and no soreness. And as I rode, those parts of my body were not properly protected from the wind.

On this lap I completed four miles and reached Maastricht. There I comforted my stomach as best as I could with a little broth, mounted again, and set off for Tongeren, a town about three miles away. This last ride was far the most painful of the lot. The horse went very awkwardly and tortured me in the kidneys. It would have been more bearable to walk, but I was afraid of getting into a sweat, and there was a risk that night might have overtaken us in the open country; and so with incredible torment of my whole body, the kidneys and liver especially, I reached Tongeren. By this time lack of food, and physical effort on top of that, had sapped all my bodily strength, so that I could neither stand nor walk properly. My tongue retained its powers, and I used it to conceal the severity of my condition. There I warmed my stomach with a little mulled ale and went to bed.

In the morning I gave orders to hire a covered carriage and pair. The road was so rocky that I thought it wiser to stay on horseback until we came to softer ground. I therefore mounted the taller of the horses in hopes that it would move more comfortably over the stones and be more sure-footed. I

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170 four] The distance from Aachen to Maastricht is c nineteen modern miles.

177 Tongeren] Eleven miles south-west of Maastricht

had scarcely mounted when I felt a film coming over my eyes on exposure to the cold weather and asked for a cloak. But a fainting-fit soon took its place. It needed no more than a touch on the hand to arouse me. At that point my man Johannes and the other bystanders left me to come to in my own time as I sat on the horse. Once I had come to, I climbed into the carriage. Shortly afterwards I felt my bowels working; I got out and relieved them, and my colour and a certain amount of cheerfulness returned. We were now close to the town of St Truiden. I mounted my horse again, for fear that if I arrived in the carriage I should be seen to be ill. Again I was affected by the evening air and felt sick, but not enough to faint. I offered my driver double money if he would drive me next day as far as Tienen, a town six miles beyond Tongeren. He accepted the offer. Here mine host, whom I knew, told me how much the bishop of Liège had been offended by my departing for Basel without saying goodbye to him. I comforted my stomach with some broth and went to bed. It was a most dreadful night, especially through the agony I was in from the sore on my left hip; such was the piercing pain of the blood that corrupted and grew hard round the place. At this point I found by chance a four-horse carriage bound for Louvain (which was six miles away), and flung myself into it. The discomfort of the going was beyond belief and almost more than I could bear; all the same, at seven o'clock that evening we reached Louvain.

It was not my intention to make for my rooms, partly because I suspected that everything there would be deadly cold, partly because I wanted to do nothing that might in any way embarrass the college, if any rumour of plague should arise on my account. So I took refuge with Dirk the printer, such a good friend that I could be happy with him alone if things went as I could wish. That night unknown to me the largest boil had burst, and the pain had now settled down. Next day I sent for a surgeon, and he applied a soothing dressing. By now I had acquired a third sore place on my

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189 Johannes] Johannes Hovius was already an MA when he joined Erasmus at Basel. At Louvain he remained in his service perhaps until Erasmus' departure in 1521 (cf Ep 1222). In 1524 he went on to Italy; see Ep 857 introduction and Bierlaire 54–5.

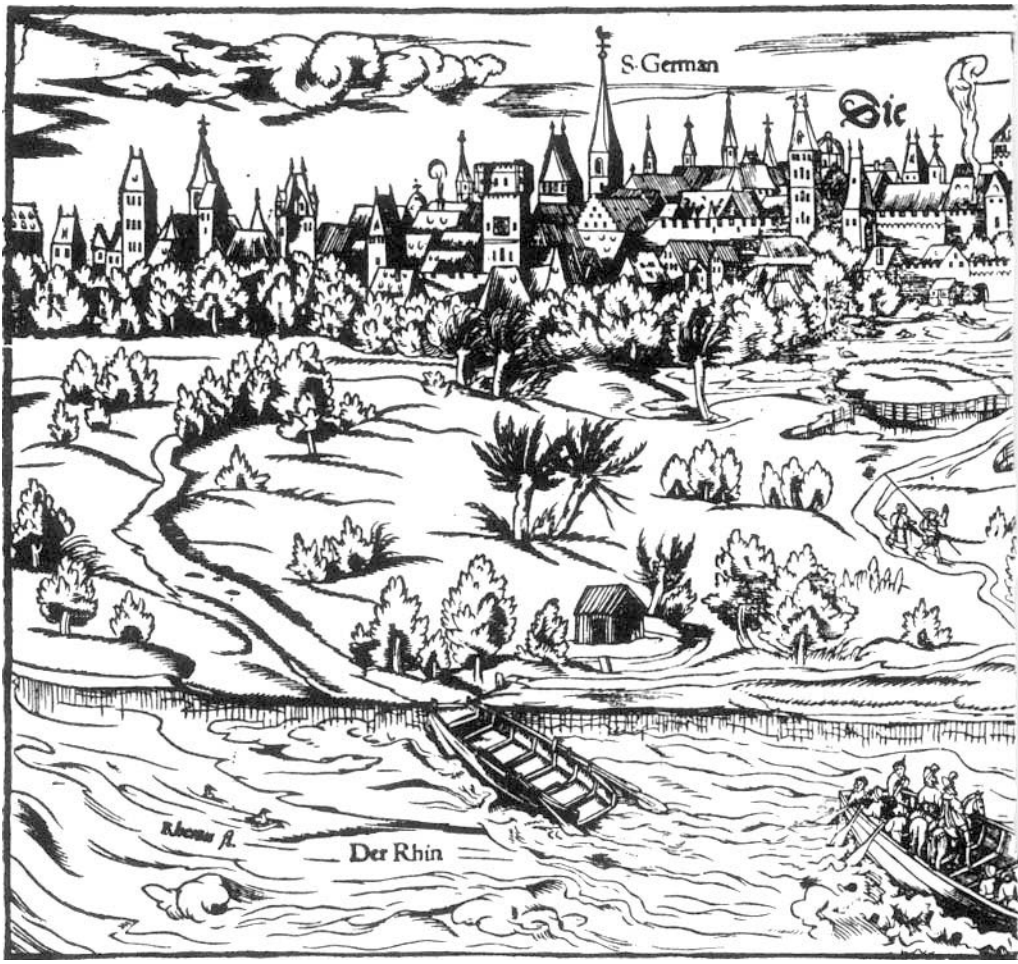
197 Here] At St Truiden, where Erasmus spent the night, twenty-one miles east of Louvain

198 Liège] Cf above line 90n and for the journey to Basel cf Ep 843 introduction.

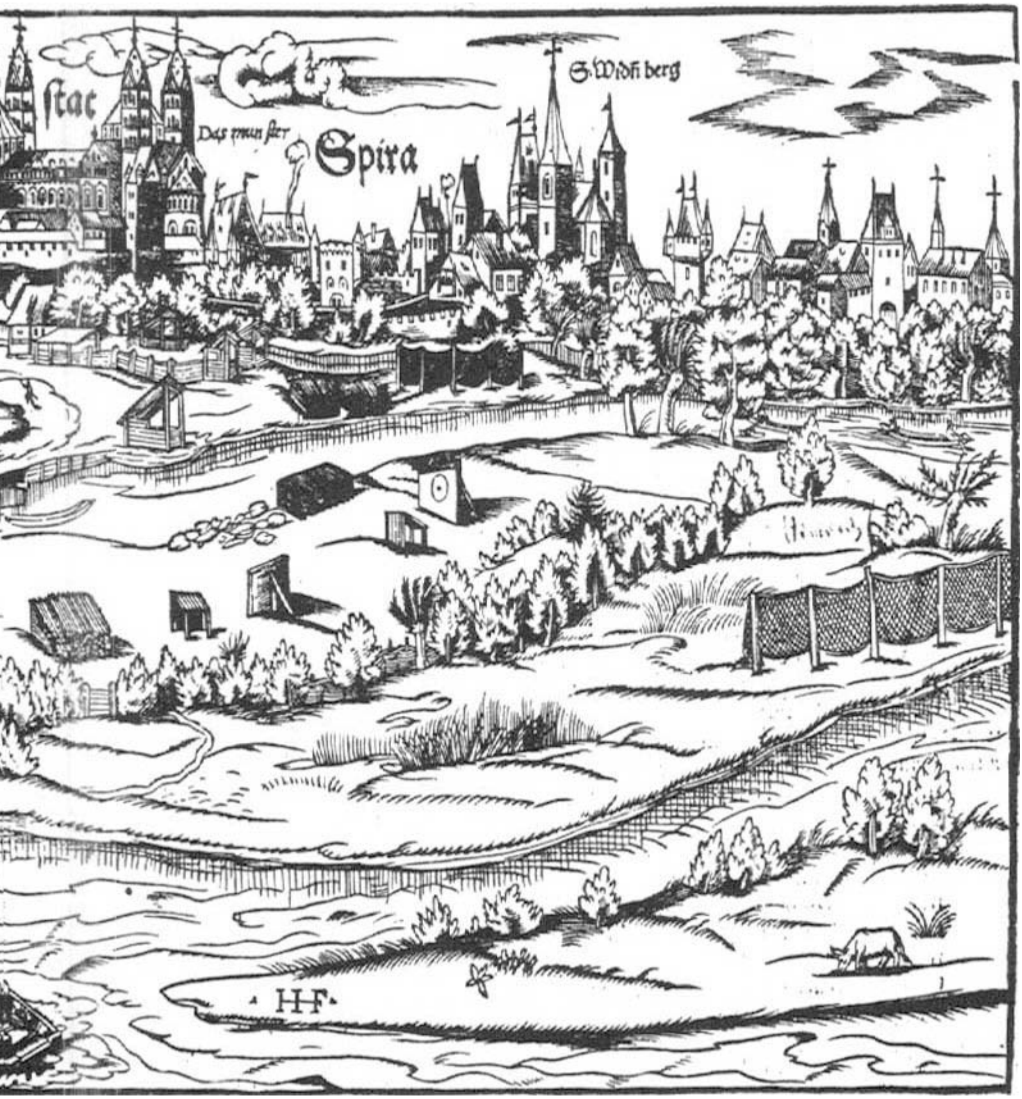
202 At this point] Apparently at Tienen, although this is only eleven miles east of Louvain. For the relation between Erasmus' miles and modern miles see above line 170n.

207 rooms] In the College of the Lily

210 Dirk] Martens


S. German
Sie
Rhenus fl.
Der Rhin

View of Speyer
Woodcut from Sebastian Münster *Cosmographei*
Basel: Henricus Petri 1550
Historisches Museum der Pfalz, Speyer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S.Widẽberg
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back, which my servant had caused at Tongeren while massaging me with attar of rose for the pain in my kidneys by rubbing too hard with his horny finger on one of my ribs. This afterwards turned sore. A lump also swelled up under my right pap of a loose kind, but this was not sore and gradually disappeared of its own accord. As the surgeon went away he told Dirk and my servant in confidence that it was the plague; he would send the emollient dressings, he said, but he would not come and see me himself. I sent my water to the physicians, who said there was no sign of disease; again I consulted others, who gave me the same assurance. I sent for the Jew. 'To judge by your urine,' he said, 'I wish I was as fit as you.' The surgeon not reappearing next day or the day after, I asked Dirk the reason. He made some excuse or other, and I guessed what was in the wind. 'What?' I said; 'does he think it's the plague?' 'That's exactly what he says,' was the reply; 'he swears there are three buboes.' I laughed heartily, and no idea of plague entered my head for one moment.

Some days later the surgeon's father came and examined me; he was of the same opinion and assured me to my face that it was a genuine case of plague. Even so he could not convince me. I sent secretly for a second surgeon of great reputation. He examined me. 'I shouldn't be frightened to share a bed with you,' he said, being a rather boorish fellow; 'have intercourse with you too, if you were a woman.' My Hebrew friend thought the same. I sent for a physician of whom they think very highly in Louvain, for good physicians in these parts are a very rare thing. I asked him whether there were any sinister signs in my water, and he said 'No.' I told him the story of my sore places, adding the reasons why I inferred it was not the plague. The sores were not new and did not arise spontaneously; the swellings to begin with were movable, and the one in my left groin always so; there was no fever, no particular headache except from the roughness of the journey, no drowsiness, the roof of my mouth permanently clean; when I was sick, it was deliberate and not natural, and I brought up nothing but the fish; once quit of that, my stomach settled down, and the subsequent loss of appetite was a personal peculiarity; there was no sign of plague in my water. He listened to the rest of it with some confidence, but the moment I mentioned the sores I saw his nerve was shaken. I gave the doctor a gold

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217 massaging] Cf Ulrich von Hutten *De guaiaci medicina* (Mainz: J. Schöffer April 1519) f K 3 verso–4 recto. Hutten reports Erasmus' faith in such a daily massage, especially on getting up in the morning. Hutten, like other young friends, was advised to try it, and was pleased with the result.

223 Jew] Matthaeus Adrianus, who was a physician as well as a professor of Hebrew; his name is added in the margin of the *Farrago* of 1519.

crown and he promised to see me again after dinner. Terrified by what I said, he sent his servant. I refused to see him, lost patience with physicians, and commended my fate to Christ the great physician.

My stomach recovered itself in a couple of days on minced chicken and a bottle of Beaune, and I went back to work too without delay and finished the missing parts of the New Testament. Seventeen days later black dead flesh came away from my sores, which was just what the surgeons had said would happen. The swelling in my left groin had now come up, but not so as to hurt, and that frightened me seriously. An absurd suspicion entered my mind, and I only hope a mistaken one, that this trouble might have arisen out of contact with my horse. For two or three times I drove off flies sitting on the sore with my bare hand, and then I handled those parts of my body casually while making water or putting on my under-shirt. But on this point the surgeon told me without hesitation that there was no cause for anxiety whatever. By now the swelling is softer and has gone down somewhat, but even so it makes no move at all as yet. The sores are now out of danger, the lump on my right chest is disappearing of its own accord.

My recovery in Dirk's house lasted some four weeks, and I went back to my own rooms. Only once did I get out to mass in the nearest church, for my strength was not really up to it yet. If it was indeed plague, I drove the plague away at the cost of great effort and discomfort and determination; for often a great part of any disease is our fancy that we have it. From the moment of my arrival I had given out that no one should come and see me unless personally invited, for fear that I might make anyone terrified for his own safety or that anyone's kind attentions should be insupportable to me; all the same Dorp made his way in, before anybody else, and soon afterwards Atensis. Marcus Laurinus and Paschasius Berselius, who came every day, did away a good part of my illness by their most charming company.

My dear Beatus, who would suppose that my emaciated frame, which was always delicate and is now even more feeble from advancing years, would after such laborious journeys and exhausting researches still support so many bouts of sickness? You know yourself how gravely ill I was not long ago in Basel, and that too more than once. A certain suspicion had entered my mind that the year might prove fatal to me: so relentlessly did one disaster

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274 Dorp ... Atensis] See Ep 852 introduction and 67n.
275 Berselius] See Ep 674 introduction.
281 ill ... in Basel] Cf Ep 847:7n.
283 fatal] Erasmus had paid some attention to the astrological predictions for 1518; see Epp 755:32n, 803:10n.

succeed another, each worse than the last. Yet even at the moment when sickness lay most heavy upon me, my frame of mind was such that I was neither tormented by the desire to live nor terrified by fear of death. In Christ alone was all my hope, and all I asked of him was that he should give me what he might think best for me. When I was a young man, I remember how I used to tremble even at the mere name of death. In this at least I have profited as I grew older: I fear death very little, nor do I measure man's felicity by length of days. I have passed my fiftieth year; and seeing how few out of so many reach it, I cannot fairly complain that my life has been too short. And then, if this has anything to do with it, I have already built a monument to bear witness to posterity that I existed. It may be that from the pyre, as poets put it, not only will envy retire in silence but glory will shine out with more distinction – though it is not right for a Christian's heart to be touched by human glory. O that I might but win the glory of being acceptable to Christ! My dearest Beatus, farewell. You will find the rest of my news in my letter to Capito.

Louvain, 1518

868 / To Ambrogio Leoni Louvain, 15 October [1518]

The source of this letter is the *Farrago* of October 1519, which gives the year date as 1519 but does not otherwise include letters dated after 15 August 1519. Moreover, this letter answers Ep 854, and if more than a year had elapsed between the writing of Epp 854 and 868, Erasmus would probably have offered an explanation or an apology.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE DISTINGUISHED PHYSICIAN AMBROGIO LEONI, GREETING

Your letter, my learned Ambrogio, gave me all the more pleasure for being quite unexpected. It refreshed my whole memory of the days when we lived together: as I read it, I seemed to be back in Venice, to see my old friends around me and warm to their society – Aldus, Battista Egnazio, Girolamo Aleandro, Marcus Musurus, and you above others, the dearest friend of all.

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291 fiftieth] Cf Ep 868:101n.

294 from the pyre] Perhaps an allusion to Ovid *Amores* 1.15.39, quoted in *Adagia* II vii 11: 'Envy feeds on the living, and is silent after death.'

298 letter] Ep 877

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6 society] See Ep 269:54–7; for Aldo Manuzio cf also Ep 207 and for Aleandro Ep 256.

I felt again the same habitual charm in your letter, full as it is of humour and wit. How I envy you, growing old in the most honourable pursuits in what is easily the grandest city of them all among patricians and men of learning, while my own destiny has inflicted on me more mishaps and more wanderings than ever Neptune in Homer gave Ulysses! You must not think any of this is due to my own inconstancy; in all the changes and chances of my fate I have always been the same Erasmus who never changes. Nor have I ever been different from what I am now; but the plot of the play took charge, and at different times I have had different parts to play. Yet it is really not until you know all the scenes in which I have had to play my part that you could accuse me of being a Pythagoras or a Proteus. The number of times, after all that has happened, that those men have buried me, the number of times I have survived my own decease! The enemies of humane letters kill me off nearly every year and report me dead and buried. How often have I made my way to Basel through the thick of robbery and plague! The monsters I have had to contend with, the labours I have had to get through! You might well think your old friend Erasmus, who used to be made of glass, was now pure adamant. What would you? So runs my destiny. How much happier you are, who can argue quietly about philosophy in honourable and tranquil ease, nor does any storm assail you and drive you off course out of the even tenor of your life.

The productions of which you write are eagerly awaited, offspring worthy not merely of a Lion, as you call them, but of an Ambrose, which means they must be as charming as they are forceful and make us think of Homer's Nestor with his 'honeyed gift of speech.' It is right and proper that you should write of your native Nola, for all that Virgil once grudged it any renown. How I wish your great book against Averroes, that thrice-accursed atheist, had come out! What of your problems of natural history, a work you had in hand long ago? I wonder you do not mention it; nor do you say anything of Greek, which you took up when already grey-haired and yet

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14 never changes] Although men were called to play changing roles, in Erasmus' view their character was static; see Bietenholz *History and Biography* 69–87.

32 Nestor] Homer *Iliad* 1.249

33 Virgil] Aulus Gellius 6.20.1 recounts how Virgil cut the name of Nola in Campania out of his *Georgics* because the inhabitants had annoyed him.

34 Averroes] The book was in print, as Leoni had said (Ep 854:91–3). Erasmus' expression of abhorrence is conventional, as it was generally believed that the twelfth-century Muslim philosopher had maintained the mortality of the soul.

35 problems] Leoni's *Novum opus quaestionum seu problematum ... utilissimorum ... in philosophia et medicinae scientia* (Venice: B. and M. de' Vitali 1523). Ten years earlier during his sojourn in Venice Erasmus had seen a manuscript of it; cf *Adagia* III vii 66.

with such success – an important precedent: hereafter let no young learner ever despair. You remind me that one should 'not without reason to Abydos sail,' and I wish you had issued the warning earlier. As it is, once I have entrusted myself to winds and waves, I am inevitably borne away as they may please. All the same, in the great upheavals aroused nearly every day by the rascals who are in league against the humanities, I trim my ship with reason and philosophy for my ballast and fight the storm with such skill as I can muster.

The movements on the part of the Turks need give us no cause for fear, if only the Christian princes would be of one mind. I see you have the heart of a true philosopher: you fear the effect not on landed property and private fortunes but on culture – and culture may perish without calling in the Turks! This is the objective pursued with the greatest energy by certain monks and theologians I could name. For how small a part of culture does a man leave untouched who will do away with all knowledge except sophistical theology and a distorted acquaintance with the law, who shows the door to the learned tongues, and at one blow condemns the humanities in any form! But these people, who have more brass than brains, get nowhere. The whole of France, all Germany, and Britain itself welcome good literature with open arms, with the warm approval and even assistance of their rulers.

Marcus Musurus chose to be a bishop rather than a professor, but as he was hastening to his goal he was sucked in by Rome. I doubt if anyone among us here has the effrontery to expose himself willingly on such a stage as yours; no Frenchman or German would enter the lists against the Italians, indeed against Musurus' own progeny, with the certainty of getting nothing but mockery and catcalls for his pains. I was very glad to learn from you the name of Pietro Alcionio, and I wish I could also see what he has written, especially his versions from Aristotle. I should like to know the whole man more intimately, especially since he does not despise my own work, which would not be the case unless he were a singularly fair-minded person. I will approach him by letter on some other occasion; for the moment, please give him my best wishes.

In Britain there is a man of all-round erudition, Thomas Linacre, who will have been known to you long ago from the glowing reports of Aldus and myself – a man of the same calling as you and, if I mistake not, the same age.

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39 Abydos] See Ep 854:47n.

58 Musurus] Cf Ep 729:60–2.

68 approach him] No exchange of letters between Erasmus and Alcionio is known to exist.

He is engaged on the same task as yourself, the publication of a series of works which he has been polishing for many years. His Galen *On the Preservation of Health* is out – a version so faithful, so clear, in such stylish Latin, that the reader who knows Latin only loses nothing; in fact, he will find everything better done than in the Greek. This was followed by his *Therapeutice*; and you know what a state our text was in before. We hope his next production will be the *Meteorologica* of Aristotle, first corrected with incredible labour and then most felicitiously translated. He has a great many things among his papers which will be very valuable to those who wish to learn. With these publications he secures himself an immortal name, adds glory to his native England, and sheds lustre on the king's court, and above all on the king, to whom he is physician in ordinary. In France too that great man Guillaume Cop with a new book from time to time is establishing our right to be heard in medicine. Budé works his way through the legal authorities, cleansing the Augean stables as he goes. All receive advice with pleasure; we theologians alone are unwilling to learn a more excellent way.

Mind you take great care of your health, my learned Ambrogio, so that you may long be a pillar of the humanities and that, now we are both getting old, I may enjoy your friendship for many years. You have a lead over me, but I am not far behind, being now almost entirely white-headed. Aldus when the conversation was running free used to be rather amusing, imitating the broken accents of a decrepit old man which he thought we should use in time to come in addressing one another.'And how goes it then, Master Erasmus?' he would say; and then in just such a snuffling voice, but rather weaker (representing me) he would reply 'If you're all right, I'm all right.' Such was the merry picture he would draw, especially if we went on to discuss the foundation of a new academy; but he did not play his promised part. Before he had reached that toothless age, he left us; though Aldus was much

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74 Galen] For the publication of the two translations by Linacre cf Ep 755:32n.

79 *Meteorologica*] Never published. Writing to Dorp on 21 October 1515, More reported that Linacre had completed the translation of two books before he became absorbed with Galen; cf Rogers Ep 15:1299–1310.

97 reply] 'Si vales, ego valeo' is a pedestrian commonplace in humanistic epistolography, though it has a distinguished ancestry in Cicero.

99 new academy] A statute for such an association was printed by Aldus, probably in 1502, and mentioned in his colophons over the next few years, but as patronage was not forthcoming it gradually became, as this passage shows, a subject for nostalgic jokes; see M.J.C. Lowry 'The "New Academy" of Aldus Manutius – Renaissance Dream' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of Manchester* 58 (1975–6) 378–420.

older than me, more or less twenty years, I should think. For I am now in my fifty-second or fifty-third year.

I should love to go on chattering to you, dear Leoni, but business calls me away. Your name will last for ever in my proverbs, provided only that they last themselves; nor will you be unwilling in your turn to mention the name of Erasmus in your own work. Be sure to give my greetings to the excellent Battista Egnazio, and also to Asolano and his household, especially little Manuzio who used to play round us as a child, when I was with you. Farewell.

From Louvain, 15 October [1519]

869 / To Guillaume Budé — Louvain, 15 October 1518

This letter, which was published in the *Farrago*, continues Erasmus' flamboyant correspondence with the leading humanist of France (cf the preface to this volume). It is a preliminary reply to Budé's long and ambiguous Ep 810, which had gone astray and only reached Erasmus when he was about to leave Basel at the beginning of September (cf lines 3–4; Ep 886:41–3). When he wrote this, Erasmus was recovering from his severe illness (cf Ep 867) and was not yet well enough to compose a full answer. This letter reached Budé on 30 October (Ep 896:116); he lost no time in giving vent to his displeasure in Ep 896.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND GUILLAUME BUDÉ, GREETING

That prolix letter which you wrote about the 13th April reached me about the first of September, having been sent back from Genoa; and such a letter it was as made me think it might be better for your reputation and mine too if it were suppressed. I fancy I have come to know your characteristic way of thinking, and I am sure you were sincere in what you wrote, but I have my

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101 more or less twenty] Aldo Manuzio was born in 1451. The following remark about Erasmus' own age, particularly if compared with the even vaguer statement in Ep 867:291, is typical of the difficulties involved in clarifying the date of his birth; cf Ep 940.

104 proverbs] Cf *Adagia* I ii 63 and above line 35n; for the publication of the *Adagia* see Epp 269 introduction, 609:5n.

107 Egnazio … Asolano] Cf Epp 588–9. Andrea Torresani of Asola was the father-in-law of Aldo Manuzio and his partner and successor in the printing firm.

108 little Manuzio] Paolo Manuzio, Aldus' youngest son; cf Epp 589:58, 61:47.

869

4 Genoa] Cf Ep 896:113.

doubts whether I could persuade others of that. And then, suppose what you say reaches the eyes of posterity. Beatus Rhenanus read your letter to me, as it was then after dinner and my eyes were troublesome, and he is an educated man and wonderfully fair minded and (what is the chief thing in scholarship) of sound judgment. I would rather not repeat his comments, and that although I had warned him that you are by nature rather outspoken in humorous intercourse between friends. Competition in abuse is unworthy of an honourable man, and to match one quibble with another is a dreary business. In solid arguments I could defeat you as easily as you outclass me in the resources of style, as even Deloynes or Ruzé would agree or any even more devoted partisan of yours. But I would rather have the friendship of one Budé than ten victories of that kind. One defence is more than enough.

In Basel I was ill almost all the time. On the journey I had recovered, but once past Cologne I was at death's door again. So I am still sitting idle at home. The surgeon inspected three sore places, and pronounced that it was plague, wrongly, in my opinion. I will write to the bishop when I have time, and to you too at greater length. Give my greetings to Glareanus, if you happen to see the man. His last letter has also reached me. Farewell.

Louvain, 15 October 1518

870 / To Conradus Mutianus Rufus Louvain, 17 October 1518

Epp 870–6 were written as a result of the visit of Helius Eobanus (see Epp 874 introduction, 877:9–11), who delivered letters and gifts from several of his fellow humanists in the circle gathered around the University of Erfurt. At nearby Gotha, Konrad Mut, called Mutianus Rufus (see Ep 501:9–10n), had been the teacher of most of them and continued in the role of fatherly friend and adviser. Epp 870–1, 873–4, 876 were published by Eobanus with his *Ad Des. Erasmum Roterodamum Hodoeporicon* (Erfurt: M. Maler [January 1519]), which is an account in hexameters of his journey.

Eobanus and his companion, Johann Werter (see Ep 875), reached Louvain

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17 Deloynes or Ruzé] François Deloynes and Louis Ruzé, close friends and relations of Budé (see Epp 493:62, 494). From later remarks it would seem that each had sent a letter to Erasmus enclosed with Budé's Ep 810; see Epp 906:227, 611–12, 915:139–41.

19 defence] The *Apologia ad Fabrum;* cf Ep 597:37n.

21 ill] Cf Ep 847:7n.

24 bishop] Etienne Poncher, bishop of Paris; see Ep 529.

25 greater length] Ep 906

26 last letter] Missing; cf Ep 866:9–10.

on 16 October (or 17, as stated in the *Hodoeporicon*). On the following morning they visited their idol, but as Erasmus was still recovering and anxious to resume the revision of the New Testament (cf Ep 864 introduction) they had to rely on their own enthusiasm to compensate for his impatience, which is reflected in some of the letters he felt compelled to give them (Epp 873, 875; cf Ep 942:31–3; Allen Ep 2495:16–21). This is why Erasmus would have preferred to amplify them before publication (cf Ep 982) and never included them in his collected correspondence. In fact, Erasmus was not indifferent to the admiration shown to him by his visitors (cf Epp 877:9–11, 883:15–17); he had the *Hodoeporicon* reprinted by Martens in 1519 (NK 764; cf Ep 982) and he did publish Ep 875, which was not included in it. Eobanus' visit led to new homages from the Erfurt circle, which Erasmus received with a similar mixture of gratification and impatience; see Ep 963:6n, and for the *Hodoeporicon* see Krause *Eobanus* I 288–99.

TO THE HONOURABLE MUTIANUS RUFUS, PARAGON OF ALL LEARNING, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Unfortunately Eobanus found me ill and very busy; otherwise his visit would have given the greatest pleasure. In the Muses' name, what fluency his verses show, what an original vein of talent, what happy phrasing! You would think him a poet born, not made by practice. He has the same gifts in prose, and a character such as would grace even our theologians, if my prayers were answered. Happy indeed is Germany, and Erfurt especially, did she but know her good fortune. I was delighted by your letter too, with its fairness of mind, the mirror of its fair-minded writer. As for the gift, for a long time I would not accept it, till I learnt that it came from you. I have composed a list of all the things I ever wrote, though I myself can hardly recall the lightweight pieces. Farewell.

Louvain, 17 October 1518

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870

9 but know] An oblique allusion to Virgil *Georgics* 2.458. Eobanus may have complained about his salary at Erfurt; cf Ep 874:17n.

9 your letter] Starting out from Erfurt, the travellers had spent the first night with Mutianus at Gotha; Mutianus gave them a letter for Erasmus, but it is now missing.

12 list] Evidently an early draft for *Lucubrationum Erasmi Roterodami index* (Louvain: Martens 1 January 1519); cf Allen I 1 (not in NK); Ep 492 introduction.

871 / To Johannes Draconites Louvain, 17 October 1518

For the source of this letter see Ep 870 introduction. Johannes Draconites (Drach or Trach) of Karlstadt on the Main (1494–1566) was a canon and professor at Erfurt. Subsequently Luther attracted him to Wittenberg, where he received a theological doctorate in 1523.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND
JOHANNES DRACO OF KARLSTADT, GREETING

I send a brief answer to your most friendly letter, dear Draco. After a prolonged illness in Basel, I had suffered a most dangerous relapse and was also more burdened with the pressure of business than anyone would believe possible; and so it was not only a great pleasure but profitable too, when our friend Eobanus, who in himself deserves admiration and affection, introduced you to me as a new friend, though in friendship I was well supplied already; and Helius by himself would suffice to protect my native Germany from a charge of barbarism. In heaven's name, what ease and fluency in his verse! I think of him as Ovid reincarnate. And he is the same in prose; for he produced a sample of his work in both, and that on the spur of the moment. And then how fair-minded he is, how charming and how natural – immune at all points from the faults so common among lovers of poetry, especially Italians! How pure and truly religious is the vein in which he sings of the heroines of Christianity! Germany would be thrice blessed if more poets like him would come forward; and some do so already. But I perceive that far more will appear once princes and prelates begin to do honour to men of talent; though this is already the practice of the noble Duke Frederick of Saxony and the archbishop of Mainz, a great and famous figure

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871

4 illness] Cf Ep 847:7n.

9 Helius] Also Hessus (line 22), names of Eobanus; see Ep 874 introduction.

16 heroines] Cf *Heroidum christianarum epistolae* (Leipzig: M. Lotter, preface dated 13 June 1514), letters of holy love in elegiac form addressed to God, Christ, and others by Mary, Mary Magdalen, and other saintly women. A Christian imitation of Ovid, from whom the title *Heroides* is borrowed, the work established Eobanus' reputation as a poet. But Eobanus was not entirely free of what Erasmus considered the faults of Italy's neo-Latin poets: his earlier *Bucolicon* included passionate verses of bucolic love.

20 Frederick … archbishop of Mainz] Erasmus set great hopes on their patronage of learning and thought that it was befitting to commend them for it in one breath (cf Ep 919:48–50). Frederick the Wise had founded the University of Wittenberg and was collecting a substantial library (cf Ep 711:17–18), while Albert of Brandenburg was the chancellor of the University of Erfurt apart

even if we overlook his cardinal's hat. One thing grieves me, that our friend Hessus should have endured so long a journey to no purpose; for what could he profit by it? Could it be worth while, just to see Erasmus full-length? The better part of me, if there is any good in me at all, he had already perused in my published work. As for the rest, what could there be in it worth a visit? Your present was welcome as a token of your feelings towards me.

Farewell.

Louvain, 17 October 1518

872 / To Johann Lang — Louvain, 17 October [1518]

From a manuscript copy in the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, MS chart. A 399 f 222. The copy was probably made around 1553, but the authenticity of the text is generally accepted (cf line 20n), although J. Beumer (*Scrinium* II 319) has recently questioned Erasmus' authorship of some harsh expressions both here and in Ep 983.

Johann Lang of Erfurt (c 1485–1548) became prior of the house of Augustinian Eremites in his native city in 1516 and also taught in the university. He and Luther had lived under the same roof both at Erfurt and at Wittenberg, where both were under the direction of Staupitz (cf line 5n). Lang was a close friend of Eobanus (Ep 874) and like him favoured the Reformation, for which he won Erfurt in 1525. But at his request Eobanus did not publish this extraordinary letter with his *Hodoeporicon*, evidently because at this time Lang still judged the contents incompatible with his position as a member of a religious order. Erasmus ought to have been grateful. See Eobanus' dedicatory epistle to Justus Jonas, reprinted in *Jonas Briefwechsel* I Ep 21.

TO THE WORTHY FATHER JOHANN LANG,
A DISTINGUISHED THEOLOGIAN

You must be content, most fairminded of theologians, if you are my creditor in point of letters, provided I keep level with you in affection. Hessus, that most gifted of men, found me both ill and very busy. Staupitz is a great figure

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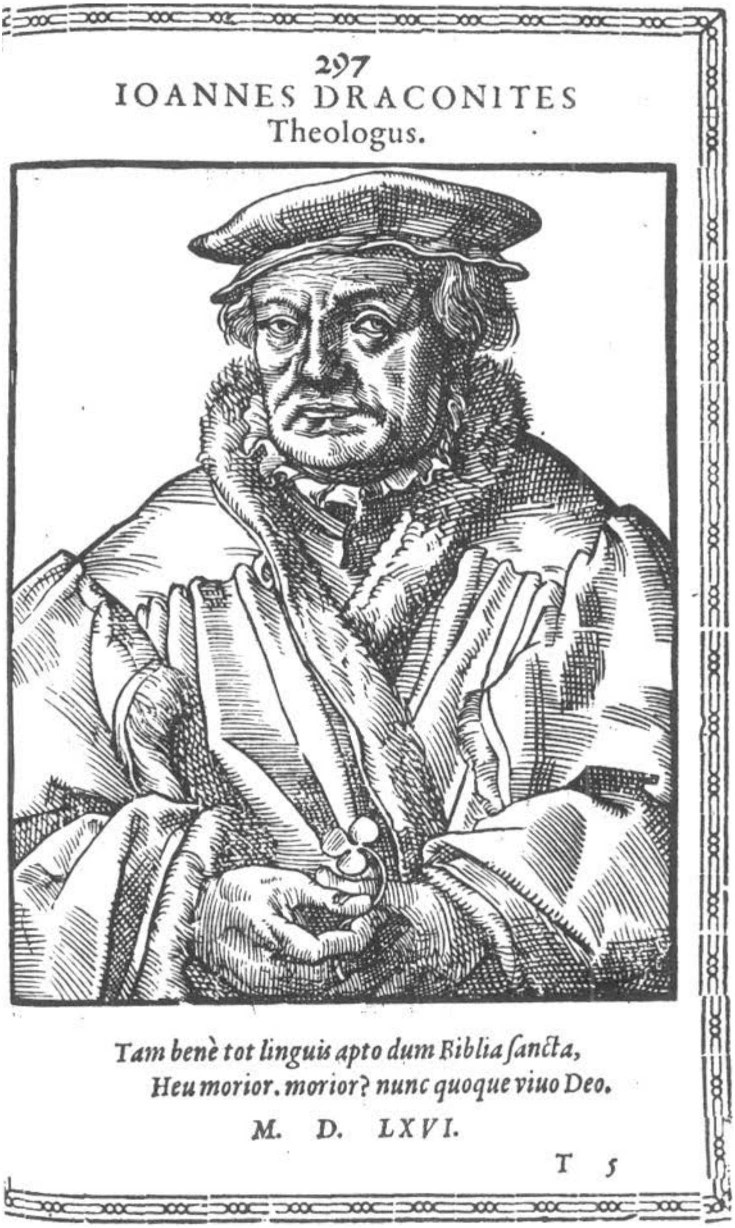
from surrounding himself with humanist councillors such as Hutten; cf the preface to this volume and for Albert's cardinalate Ep 891:27n.

872

5 Staupitz] Johann von Staupitz, 1469(?)–1524, of Saxon nobility. An Augustinian Eremite, he was called to Wittenberg in 1503 to become the first dean of the theological faculty. Notwithstanding his personal affection for and considerable influence on the young Luther, he remained a Catholic and died in Salzburg as court preacher to the archbishop, Cardinal Matthäus Lang.



297

IOANNES DRACONITES
Theologus.

Tam benè tot linguis apto dum Biblia ſancta,
Heu morior. morior? nunc quoque viuo Deo.

M. D. LXVI.

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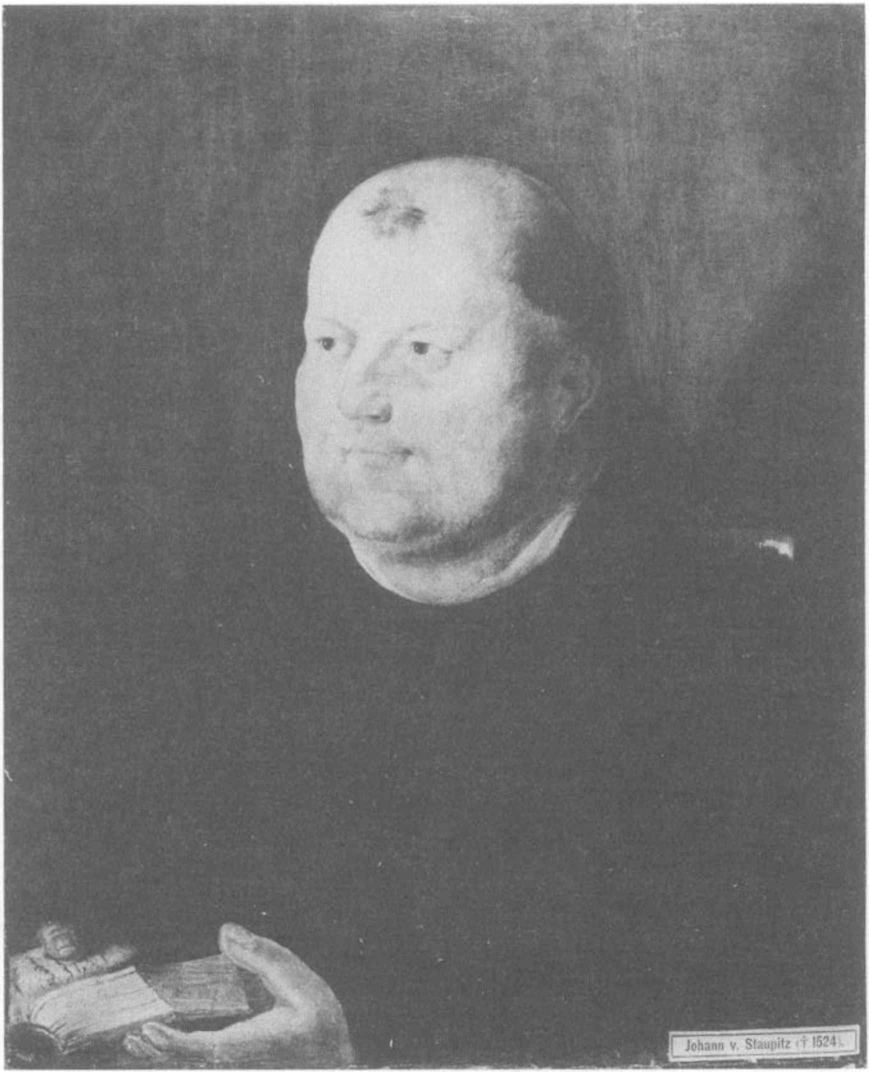
Johannes Draconites
Woodcut from Nikolaus Reusner *Icones sive imagines* (Strasbourg 1590)
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies,
Victoria University, Toronto


Johann v. Staupitz († 1524).

Johann von Staupitz
Contemporary portrait in the Erzabtei St Peter, Salzburg
Photo: Oskar Anrather, Salzburg

and I like him very much; those malignant opponents of yours I long ago dismissed; for what else could I do? As though I were obliged to give them chapter and verse for what my conscience tells me! Enough for me if I satisfy all the bishops and the first and best of the divines. If I saw any way of life wherein I could think myself more likely to be pleasing to Christ, I would follow it forthwith; for my spirit is no longer attracted by reputation or money or pleasure or love of life.

Your present shall be placed among my treasures, with those I value most. On the quotation of Cleopas, Egranus has already published a learned reply. Eleutherius, I hear, is approved of by all the leading people; but they say that his writings are not what they were. I imagine that his Conclusions satisfied everyone, except for a few of them on purgatory, which that school of thought are loth to lose because of its effect on their daily bread. I have seen Silvestro's very ill-judged reply. I perceive that the absolute rule of a certain high-priest you know of, as that See is now run, is the curse of

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14 Egranus] Johannes Wildenauer of Cheb (Eger) in Bohemia (d 1535), called Egranus. He was at this time a preacher at Zwickau and frequently corresponded with Luther. In 1517 he rejected the traditional opinion that St Anne had married Cleopas (cf Luke 24:18; John 19:25) after the death of Joachim, and soon had to defend his view in two publications. The one referred to here is most likely the *Apologetica responsio* (Wittenberg: [J. Grünenberg, early April] 1518). On 4 September 1518 Capito wrote to Luther that Erasmus had read it with approval in Basel and encouraged a reprint. The latter is *Apologetica responsio* (Basel: P. Gengenbach August 1518); see Luther w I 315 and *Briefwechsel* I Epp 55, 65, 68, 91.

15 Eleutherius] The form often used at this time by Luther for signing his letters.

16 Conclusions] The Ninety-five Theses; cf Ep 785:39n. The controversial issue of purgatory was raised primarily in theses 10–25; subsequently Luther had to defend and expand the stand here taken in his *Resolutiones;* cf Ep 904:20n.

19 Silvestro] Silvestro Mazzolini of Priero, Piedmont (1456–1523), commonly called Prierias. A Dominican since 1471, he was a professor in Rome and the pope's master of the sacred palace. In this capacity he had to examine books for heresy and published his objections to Luther's Ninety-five Theses in a dialogue *In presumptuosas Martini Lutheri conclusiones de potestate papae* [June 1518] repr in Luther *Opera latina varii argumenti* ed H. Schmidt (Frankfurt-Erlangen 1865–) I 341–72. Prierias maintained emphatically that the papal teachings were infallible and Luther's theses heretical; cf Boehmer *Luther* 218–20; F. Lauchert *Die italienischen literarischen Gegner Luthers* (Freiburg 1912) 7–30.

20 high-priest] The manuscript text (cf introduction) has in Greek 'the monarchy of the Roman archpriest' – certainly an unguarded statement at a time when Erasmus was eagerly soliciting papal protection for the New Testament (cf Ep 864). Had it been published, it would no doubt have caused him embarrassment and could have forced him to alter his public stance towards the

FRIDE RI IOH
GEORGIVS
MONE ARGEN
DVCVM SAXO

Silver Klappmütztaler, c 1500–10,
with portraits of Elector Frederick III (obverse)
and dukes George and John of Saxony (reverse)
American Numismatic Society, New York

Christianity, and the Preachers bow down before it at every point and are quite shameless. All the same, I doubt whether it is wise to tackle this sore place openly. This should be the business of the princes; but I fear they are in collusion with his holiness, hoping for a share in the spoils. I cannot think what has come into Eck's head, that he should take up the cudgels against Eleutherius; but 'What canst thou not drive mortal hearts to do, / Accursed thirst of fame?' To the noble duke whose new coin you sent me I have dedicated my revision of Suetonius. Farewell, my excellent friend, and commend me to Christ in your prayers.

Louvain, 17 October
Erasmus of Rotterdam

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Reformation sooner. He did, however, insert an uncompromising attack on the abuse of papal powers in the *Annotationes* of the 1518–19 edition of the New Testament (LB VI 64D–E; cf Ep 864 introduction), and as late as 1532 he wrote of the 'tyranny' of the pope, which, when it occurs, must be broken (Allen Ep 2615:257–8). For other critical assessments of the use popes sometimes made of their powers see Epp 891:27–34, 983:13–17, Allen Ep 1039:110–17, 262–4.

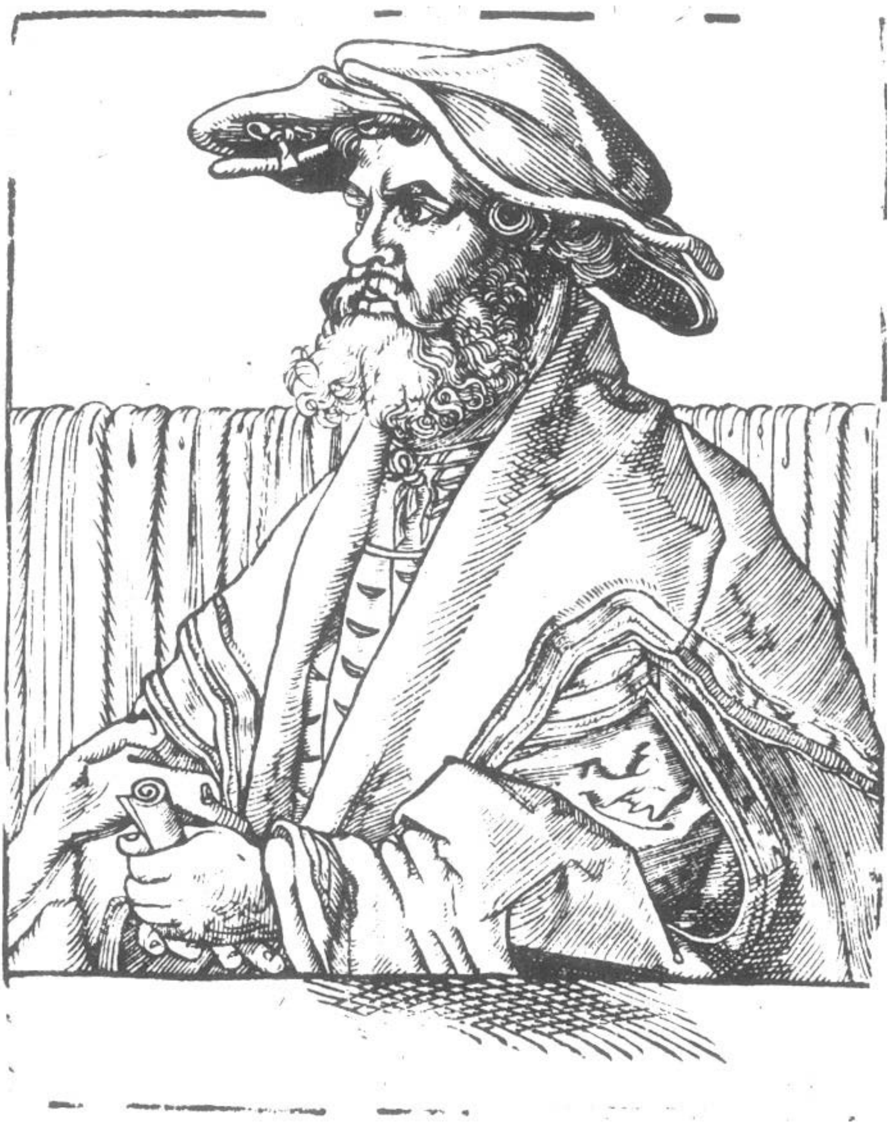
21 Preachers] Dominicans, such as Prierias

25 Eck] Eck had put down his objections to the Ninety-five Theses in a series of 'Obeliscs,' to which Luther replied in the spring of 1518 with his 'Asteriscs.' Both pamphlets circulated in manuscript; cf Luther W I 278–314; *Briefwechsel* I Epp 76, 77.

26 'What canst … fame?'] Virgil *Aeneid* 3.56, 57, with 'fame' substituted for 'gold'

27 coin] 'Nomisma': probably Lang's gift of line 13, mentioned here again on an afterthought. There were many coins and medals with the portrait of Frederick the Wise. The gift may have been one of several 'Klappmütztaler' struck by Frederick in conjunction with his relatives (see, eg, F. von Schrötter *Wörterbuch der Münzkunde*, Berlin 1930, table 15 no 257).

A similar 'nomisma' is mentioned in Ep 978, but this was probably one of the special commemorative medals which were produced with much personal involvement on the part of Frederick and were probably based on a design by Lucas Cranach (see G. Habich *Die deutschen Schaumünzen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Munich 1929–34, 1-2 p lvii–lix, plates p 5). The second gift coin bore 'a truly lifelike portrait' of the elector and was delivered by Justus Jonas and Kaspar Schalbe together with a letter now missing (cf Ep 963:6n), both in recognition of the dedication of Suetonius to dukes Frederick and George of Saxony (cf Ep 586). Since Lang had contacts with Frederick's court, the second gift coin may have been sent in view of the pleasure Erasmus here expressed with the first. That the two are not one and the same is indicated by the fact that when Erasmus wrote Epp 939:7–18, 947:43–5, the dedication of Suetonius had not yet been acknowledged, since Erasmus had failed to send the book.



Helius Eobanus Hessus
Woodcut portrait after Albrecht Dürer, 1526
Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees
of the British Museum

873 / To Heinrich Beyming — Louvain, 17 October [1518]

For the source of this letter see Ep 870 introduction. Heinrich Beyming of Butzbach, south of Giessen, matriculated at Erfurt University in 1502 and later returned there to take his MA in 1515. He was subsequently a schoolmaster in Butzbach and died as a village priest; see G. Bauch *Die Universität Erfurt* (Wrocław 1904) 162–3; E. Kleineidam *Universitas Studii Erffordensis* (Leipzig 1964–80) I 395, II 236, 309.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND HEINRICH BEYMING, GREETING

To return the affection of all my friends, excellent Beyming – that I can do, but to write to them all is too much; how am I to keep up single-handed with such a crowd of Germans, Italians, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Hungarians even? Our mutual friend Eobanus I found charming in every way, more than anything I have yet seen in Germany. As for Jodocus Winsheim the theologian, please return his greeting on my behalf. I know already that you will dub me uncivilized for not writing to him; but if I were at this moment to try and satisfy everyone, ten secretaries would not be enough, assuming I did nothing else. While actually writing this, I have refused to see several tedious Spaniards who were pressing obstinately for an interview, though I know this will give offence, their national character being what it is. Thus am I compelled in pursuit of the civilized life to be uncivil. Farewell, my dear Heinrich.

Louvain, 17 October

874 / To Helius Eobanus Hessus — Louvain, 19 October 1518

For the source of this letter see Ep 870 introduction. Eobanus (properly Eoban Koch, 1488–1540) was a peasant's son from Halgehausen near the Cistercian abbey of Haina in Hesse. He adopted the first name Helius in honour of the sun god because he was born on a Sunday. From 1518 he held a Latin chair at Erfurt and became the head of a circle of humanists and poets, establishing his

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873

7 Winsheim] Jodocus Textoris (Eckart) of Winsheim near Würzburg, d 1520 in Erfurt. He matriculated, like Beyming, in 1502 and became vicar of the church of St Severus. In 1520 he was offered a lectureship at the University of Leipzig and obtained a theological doctorate at Erfurt, but he died two weeks after his promotion; see Kleineidam (cf introduction) II 220–1, 308–9.

12 Spaniards] Cf Ep 545:16–19.

reputation as one of Germany's leading Latin poets. He offered his talent in the service of Reuchlin, Luther, and German patriotism; see NDB; Krause *Eobanus.*

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND EOBANUS HESSUS, GREETING

I thought I knew my Germany well and had sought out all its distinguished minds. I was devoted to the abilities of Beatus Rhenanus, found Philippus Melanchthon's character delightful, admired Reuchlin's dignity, and was much taken with Hutten's charming conversation. And here is Hessus all of a sudden, uniting in himself all I had previously loved or admired in others separately. What does one think of in your *Heroides* but a Christian Ovid? Who is so happy in plain prose as you are in verse of every kind? Your learning balances your gifts of expression, and your Christian piety enhances both. In prose you are already so successful that one would think you had no poetry in you. Yours is a truly golden vein of talent. And your character matches your style: nothing could be more frank, more simple, more unspoilt. A rare bird indeed is learning untouched by arrogance. What more can one hope for, my learned Hessus, except that your great gifts, which you owe partly to hard work and partly to heaven, should be answered by good fortune? And this will come to pass if the princes of Germany begin to pay honour to men of talent and add this, the better part of glory, to the fame they have won in battle. I might well have sought you out over land and sea; and of your own accord you make a long and dangerous journey to see my humble self, a creature of small reputation, and even that much he does not deserve. I congratulate myself on a great acquisition, the friendship not only of Hessus, but of other outstanding men; it is you who have my sympathy, who have undertaken so much to gain so little. Farewell, chief ornament of our native Germany.

Louvain, 19 October 1518

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874

5 Melanchthon] See Ep 910 introduction.

8 *Heroides*] See Ep 871:16n.

17 fortune] Eobanus had recently been appointed professor of poetry in Erfurt, but with a growing family to support he was continually troubled by poverty and may have complained to Erasmus about the inadequacy of his salary. In 1523 he began to study medicine but never managed to join the wealthy medical profession.

875 / To Johann Werter Louvain, 19 October 1518

Johann Werter, a young nobleman, not otherwise known, matriculated at Erfurt in 1511. He received an MA in 1517; a year later he accompanied Eobanus on his visit to Erasmus (cf Ep 870 introduction) and lived for a while in Eobanus' house after their return to Erfurt. This letter was not published with the *Hodoeporicon*, either because it was felt to be tactless or because Werter had already left Eobanus and taken it with him. Erasmus did not hesitate to publish it in the *Farrago*; see Krause *Eobanus* I 289–97.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND JOHANN WERTER, GREETING

I already supposed the Germans invincible in arms, at any rate, and now I see that nothing defeats them, since you have succeeded in extracting a letter, a letter without a purpose, from Erasmus, when he is in poor health and almost done for by the endless toil of writing. I cannot express how much I am pleased by your devotion; I wish I could respond in the same vein. But I think it more worthy of a philosopher to pursue his friends with more controlled affection and to stand by them with help when they need it, not to burden them with it when they do not. When your friend's reputation is attacked, when he is laid low by disease, when he is short of money or oppressed by trouble of some other kind, then is the moment to prove your friendship, to mend the situation if you can; if not, to relieve his distress with the spoken or the written word. Otherwise, what sort of kindness is it that hurts the giver and is no help to the recipient? Why expect your friend to be grateful, under the heading of benefits received, for something from which he has felt no advantage? In the same way, some people expect credit from St James for any great loss they have suffered on their pilgrimage, or think that Christ owes them something in return for a visit to Jerusalem paid at great personal risk, when they could have earned the blessing of either had they stayed at home and done something of real service. Long ago you had seen a better picture of Erasmus in his writings, if any can be called good; indeed, if Plato is right, you had seen Erasmus entire. What then was left to be achieved by such long journeys? True affection exists between two spirits, and often it is diminished or dissolved by personal contact. But I should be less than human if I were really annoyed with you; you deserve affection in return, for this very reason that you do not seek to moderate yours. Farewell.

Louvain, 19 October 1518

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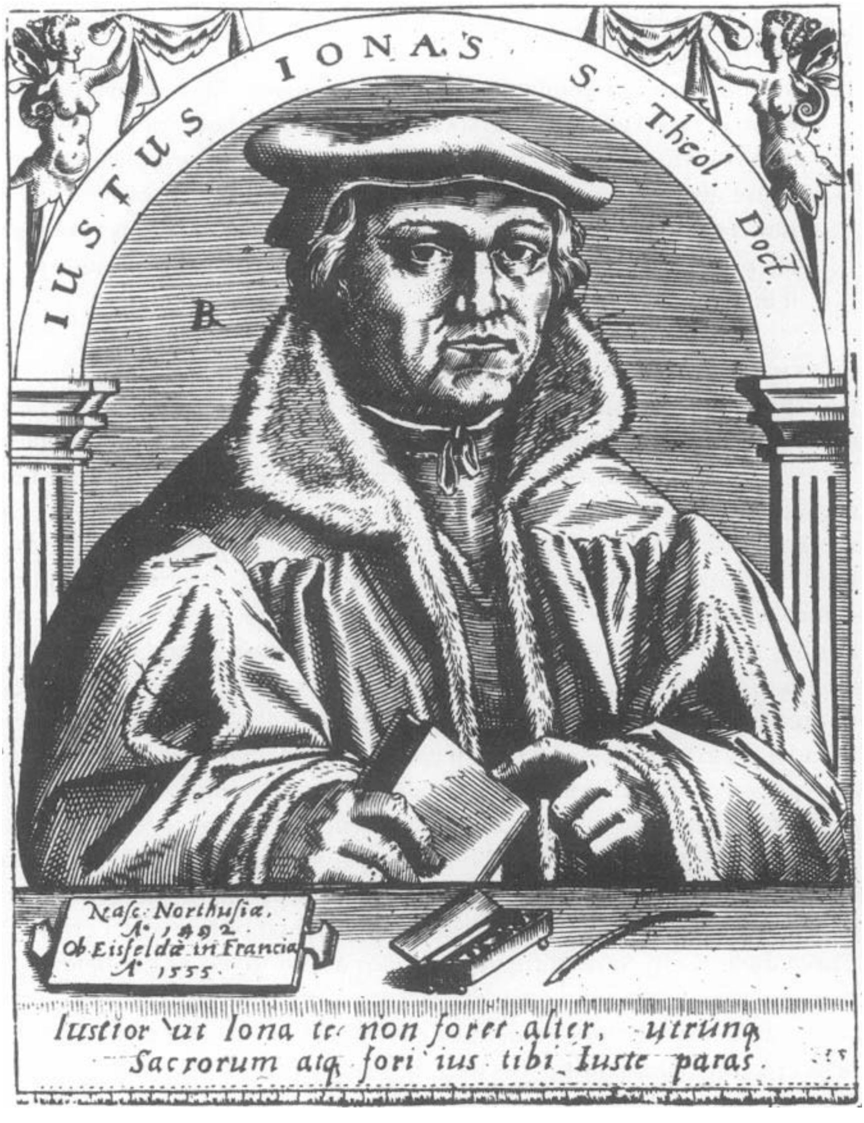
875

4 poor health] Cf Ep 867 introduction.

16 St James] Cf Ep 858:435n.


IUSTUS IONAS S. Theol. Doct.
B.
Nasc. Northusiæ.
A° 1492
Ob. Eisfeldæ in Francia
A° 1555
Iustior ut Iona te non foret alter, utrunq;
Sacrorum atq; fori ius tibi Iuste paras.

Justus Jonas
Engraved portrait by R. Boissard
in J.J. Boissard *Icones virorum illustrium* (Frankfurt 1597)
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

876 / To Justus Jonas Louvain, 19 October [1518]

For the source of this letter see Ep 870 introduction. Justus Jonas (really Jobst Koch) of Nordhausen in Thuringia (1493–1535) studied at Erfurt, where he received a legal doctorate in 1518. As a priest he received in the same year the chair of canon law and for his support a canonry at St Severus church. In 1521 he became an influential colleague of Luther and Melanchthon at Wittenberg. His letter must have impressed Erasmus, for the warmth of this reply is noticeable in comparison with the tone of Epp 873, 875. It encouraged Jonas to visit Erasmus in the spring of 1519 (cf Ep 963:6n) and led to a regular correspondence that lasted until 1521, when the gulf between Luther and Erasmus became unbridgeable. But Jonas' admiration for Erasmus continued well beyond that date.

TO THE RIGHT WORTHY AND LEARNED JODOCUS JONAS, HIS RIGHT GOOD FRIEND, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Really, my learned Jonas, you have sent me not so much a letter as affection undiluted, all the warmth of a very loving heart. In heaven's name, what breathing life, what power it has to move one and touch the heart in many ways! You try in it to draw a picture of me, but all you produced is a reflection of yourself, and while exalting my eloquence you exhibit your own. For praise of my learning or my literary skill I care nothing; one thing seriously gives me pleasure, if what I write makes anyone better, if my productions contribute to the glory of Christ. My *Enchiridion* has been printed in these last few days by Froben. I added among other things a long preface addressed to Abbot Volz. But, my dear Jonas, which side should I be on? You find gold in what I write; there are others who roundly declare that I can neither think nor write, that out of what I publish can be sucked things that will poison the faith. What storms of obloquy, as friars and divines stoned my New Testament – but all of it so far behind my back; to my face no one says a word! The praise you give me I cannot accept; what they accuse me of, I abhor. I am resolved to credit neither party, and with spirit unbowed through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, to fight on with all my might towards the goal of Christ. You must forgive my brevity. As I write, I am in poor health and more than overcome by the labour of writing. Farewell.

Louvain, 19 October

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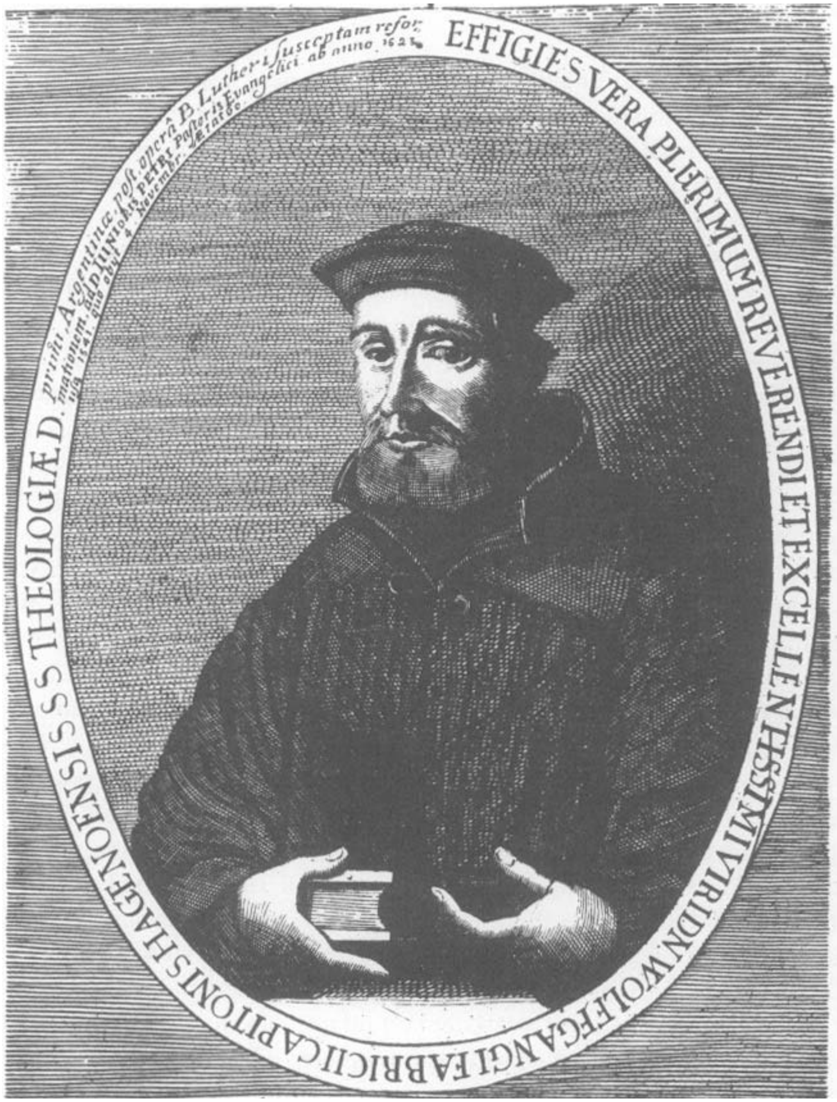
876

11 preface] Ep 858

19 through honour ... Christ] Cf 2 Cor 6:8.


EFFIGIES VERA PLURIMUM REVERENDI ET EXCELLENTISSIMI VIRI DN. WOLFGANGI FABRICII CAPITONIS HAGENOENSIS S S THEOLOGIÆ D.

Wolfgang Faber Capito
Engraving by Peter Aubry, c 1660, after an original now lost
Cabinet des Estampes, Musées de la ville, Strasbourg

877 / To Wolfgang Faber Capito Louvain, 19 October [1518]

This letter from the Deventer Letter-book complements the account of Erasmus' journey given in Ep 867. It was actually sent to Basel but was not published with Ep 867, possibly because it contains some news and views unsuitable for public consumption.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND CAPITO, GREETING

At Speyer I happened upon Irenicus with his dull childish book. I grow weary of scholarship when I see such raw youths handling the sacred vessels of the Muses. He carries round with him a page which he has altered, which he had also shown in Mainz, as though the object of the change had not been to conceal what he had written earlier. Gnostopolitanus has written me a very dull and astonishingly ignorant letter. Melanchthon has uttered a characteristic remark: that he would criticize many points in my New Testament had I not been friendly to Reuchlin. At Louvain I had a visit from Helius Eobanus the poet, a pleasant man, who had come all the way from Erfurt only to set eyes on your humble servant. Someone writes to me that Martin Luther is in danger. The *Julius* now enjoys widespread

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877

2 Irenicus] Franz Friedlieb, called Irenicus, of Ettlingen near Karlsruhe (1495–1559 or 1565). A student of Melanchthon, he received an MA at the University of Heidelberg in 1517 and subsequently taught there. He joined the Reformation after hearing Luther at the Heidelberg disputation and later combined school-teaching with the Lutheran ministry. At about this time he published his *Germaniae exegesis* (Haguenau: T. Anshelm for J. Koberger August 1518). A section in praise of German scholars is headed by a naive eulogy of Erasmus (f xlii). The work had been written earlier (cf *Scheurl's Briefbuch* Epp 136–7, 140) and was given a mixed reception (cf *Der Briefwechsel des Mutianus Rufus*, Kassel 1885, Ep 636). Allen thought that the page mentioned here was connected with this publication.

6 Gnostopolitanus] Most likely Johannes Cellarius of Burgkundstadt on the Main east of Bamberg (c 1496–1542), who may have been in Liège and Louvain in 1517 (cf Ep 674:30n). In the summer of 1518 he published a Hebrew grammar and subsequently taught the language at Heidelberg and Leipzig. Like Erasmus Melanchthon was not impressed by him; cf Luther w *Briefwechsel* I Ep 179; Melanchthon *Werke* VII–1 Ep 22; de Vocht CTL I 496.

8 he would criticize] Cf Ep 910.

10 Eobanus] See Ep 870 introduction.

12 in danger] On 7 October Luther arrived in Augsburg to face the papal legate Cardinal Cajetanus (cf Ep 891:26n). He wrote to his friends about the hearings, alternating between courageous determination and feelings of despair and doom; Luther w *Briefwechsel* I Epp 96–102.

12 *Julius*] Cf Epp 821:19n, 849:32n.

circulation and has often been printed. What times we live in! I have been visited by the author of an eightfold psalter, the bishop of Nebbio, who has read the passage in my *Apologia* where I mention him favourably. There is more vanity than venom in him. He has eight hundred francs a year from the French king.

Buschius, whom I found at Speyer, told me a nice story about Hoogstraten. When tempers were already running high in print, there appeared at his monastery a knight with a fearful great beard, who glowered at them and demanded to speak with Hoogstraten. The brethren said he was not at home. The knight insisted. They said, no, he was not there, and promised they would give him any message. 'This gallows-bird,' says he, 'has attacked in print my noble kinsman, the count of Neuenahr, and he shall pay for it. I give you solemn warning not to set foot on the estates of any of my family to collect your cheeses. You will get only a good thrashing.' Here they broke in with excuses: it was not done to please them, it was most disagreeable that for the sake of one man they should become universally unpopular. They pressed this on him at great length, and at last the knight said, 'Very well; I will believe you are speaking the truth if you throw this rascal out of your society. Otherwise, we shall assume it was done with your agreement.' So Hoogstraten is now in hiding, and he is to leave the house. He tried for a place at Koblenz, so the bishop's official told me, but was rejected. He has also been in Louvain, where I suppose he is looking for a place.

You will learn how things are with me from my letter to Beatus; please pass it around among my friends, if he does not happen to be present. Our Hebrew is a triumphant success, and all goes well with him. He is much annoyed with you; says he has been severely censured by you and even

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14 Nebbio] Agostino Giustiniani (cf Ep 810:397n); for Erasmus' *Apologia ad Fabrum* cf Ep 597:37n and for the reference to Giustiniani cf Ep 906:529n.

16 eight hundred francs] Undoubtedly French livres tournois are meant here. If so, a stipend then worth (in silver content) about £17 4s 5d gros Flemish = £11 16s 10d sterling. Cf CWE 1 318.

18 Buschius] See Ep 884 introduction.

19 Hoogstraten] Cf Ep 849:22n. Erasmus loved the story and kept repeating it; cf Epp 889:42–6, Allen Epp 1173:140–4, 1892:56–62, 2126:117–28; *Adagia* IV vii 64.

33 official] Matthias von Saarburg, see Ep 867:64n. Nothing is known about Hoogstraten's aspirations at Koblenz.

36 Beatus] Ep 867

38 Hebrew] Matthaeus Adrianus, Capito's former teacher of Hebrew. No more is known about Capito's criticism.

accused of impiety. I should be sorry if you did so, supposing you really did. Silvestro's book has been stolen out of my bag; so please send me another copy. The news of your dancing made me laugh. Farewell, and continue to be my sincere friend.

Louvain, 19 October

Give my cordial greetings to my gracious lord, and to Doctor Baer, if he is with you.

878 / To [Hermann von Neuenahr] Louvain, 19 October 1518

Cf Ep 867 introduction and lines 79–88. That this letter is addressed to Neuenahr, in reply to a letter now missing, follows from the allusions in lines 5, 12.

Greeting. That bitter dispute between two theologians made me laugh. I have had a visit from the bishop of Nebbio, author of an eightfold psalter, whom I mentioned with credit in my *Apologia* against Lefèvre. There is more vanity than venom in the man. He gets a salary of eight hundred francs from the king of France. What you write about the prince's return from Spain is quite incredible. A book has been stolen from my bag, at Antwerp if I am not mistaken, which grieves me very much. I have written to Basel to get another copy from there.

The sad story of my misfortunes you will learn from my letter to Beatus; when you have read it, please give it back to the young man who brings you this, and he will show it likewise to my other friends. How I wish I had followed your advice! This is the source of all my calamities. Dorp was the first person to visit me when there was a rumour that I was suffering from the plague, and next came Atensis. Hoogstraten has been here and had much

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41 out of my bag] See Epp 867:77–8, 872:19n.

45 gracious lord] probably Christoph von Utenheim, bishop of Basel; see Ep 598 introduction.

878

1 dispute] Cf Ep 821:19n.

2 Nebbio] Agostino Giustiniani; see Ep 906:529n, cf Ep 877:13–17.

5 you write] Cf Ep 893:39–43.

6 book] Cf Ep 877:41; the word 'Silvestro's' may inadvertently have been omitted in the Deventer Letter-book.

10 young man] Menard of Hoorn; see Ep 885:2n.

12 your advice] See Ep 867:100–110.

14 Hoogstraten] See Ep 849:22n.

talk with the Carmelite, Egmondanus. 'Thief knoweth thief, and wolf to wolf is known.' Farewell, most honourable count.

I am still keeping the house, my scars not being healed yet.

Louvain, 19 October 1518

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879 / To Christoph Eschenfelder — Louvain, 19 October 1518

Cf Ep 867 introduction and lines 50–60. Christoph Eschenfelder, the customs official at Boppard (territory of Trier), would be almost unknown but for Erasmus. After the first encounter on Erasmus' return from Basel their friendship continued until Erasmus' death. This letter was published in the *Farrago*.

TO CHRISTOPH ESCHENFELDER, CUSTOMS OFFICER AT BOPPARD

Greeting. What could be more unexpected than for an admirer of mine, Cinicampianus by name, to be found at Boppard? And moreover a customs officer devoted to the Muses and to liberal studies! Christ set it to the discredit of the Pharisees that harlots and publicans would enter before they did into the kingdom of heaven. Is it not equally discreditable that priests and monks should live for their stomachs' sake in luxury and ease, while customs officers pursue good literature? They devote themselves entirely to their appetites, while Cinicampianus divides his time between Caesar and book-learning. You made it clear enough what opinion you had formed of me; I shall do very well if it has lost nothing from a personal meeting.

But, my word, that red wine of yours went down wondrous well with the shipman's wife, 'great bosom and great boozer she,' as the poet sings; in spite of frequent appeals, she would let no one else have a turn. She drank plenty, but it was not long before she was up in arms. She nearly killed the cook-maid with her great basting-spoons; we could scarcely separate the

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15 Egmondanus] Nicolaas Baechem of Egmond near Alkmaar (d 1526) matriculated in Louvain in 1487 and received a DD in 1505. He entered the Carmelite order in 1507 and from 1510 he directed the Carmelite study house at Louvain while also teaching theology at the university. He was a prominent opponent of the Collegium Trilingue (see Ep 934 introduction) and of Erasmus himself, who detested him and ridiculed him in many places as the 'camel'; de Vocht CTL I 460–1.

15 'Thief ... known'] Cf *Adagia* II iii 63.

879

3 Cinicampianus] 'Cinderfield,' a Latinization of Eschenfelder's name

4 Christ] Cf Matt 21:31.

13 the poet] Laberius, cited by Aulus Gellius 3.12

combatants. Soon she emerged onto the upper deck and went for her husband; there was some risk that she would send him headlong out of the boat into the Rhine. You see how powerful your liquor is.

The sad story of my misfortunes you will learn from my letter to Beatus, if you have leisure to read it. Farewell, dear friend. Give my greetings to Johann Flaming, a good scholar and a man of true Christian integrity.

Louvain, 19 October 1518

880 / To [Matthias von Saarburg?] Louvain, 19 October 1518

Cf Ep 867 introduction and lines 47–9, 63–7. The greetings in line 12 are probably addressed to Johann of Westphalia. If so, this letter might be addressed to a resident of Mainz, like Johann. Perhaps he was the unnamed canon who was Erasmus' host on his return from Basel. Erasmus might have forgotten his name but expected the messenger to find out on arrival at Mainz. Allen tentatively identified the unknown canon as Theoderich Zobel (cf Epp 881:7n, 919:51–5). Zobel was a canon, but as Erasmus makes clear in Ep 919, he was more than that. He was scholaster of his chapter and vicar-general of the archbishop. Had he been Erasmus' host, one might have expected this fact to be mentioned in Ep 867 even though Erasmus might have forgotten his name.

From Ep 867 it appears likely that the canon at Mainz had not previously been known to Erasmus, but the beginning of this letter suggests a friend of longer standing. Since his Latin conversation is paid a special compliment he may well be Matthias von Saarburg (cf Epp 867:64n, 877:33). Erasmus stayed with him again in November 1521 (cf Ep 1342), and there are traces of a continuing correspondence (cf Epp 1799, 1946). Johann of Westphalia was evidently in Erasmus' company during the stay with Saarburg at Koblenz in September 1518.

Greeting. I am grateful, excellent sir, for your good will towards me; you have so often honoured me with your kind offices and encouraged me by your generosity. What could have been more enjoyable than that dinner, or better served? And the character of the company, so free-spoken, so full of learning without arrogance! The charm, the elegance of your own conversation! It might have been an ancient Roman speaking. Now let the Italians go and accuse the Germans of barbarism! You will learn the sad story of my misfortunes from my letter to Beatus; when you have read it, please give it back to the young man who brings you this, so that he can show it to other people too. There is not a word in it that is not true. This was all I lacked,

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22 Flaming] See Ep 867:62n.

after so many sufferings. This year really does deserve a black mark in my annals, if any year ever did. Farewell. Greet my friend Westphal.

Louvain, 19 October 1518
Your sincere friend Erasmus

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881 / To Johannes Longicampianus Louvain, 20 October [1518]

Cf Ep 867 introduction and lines 45–7. Johann Gusebel, called Longicampianus (d 10 March 1529), was a Bavarian. He had visited Erasmus at Brussels in 1516 (cf Ep 496). He was then at Mainz and may have hoped for a position at Louvain. With the help of Melanchthon he was appointed to teach mathematics at the University of Wittenberg in 1525. He also ran a private school there, but died in poverty; see Melanchthon *Werke* VII-1 Epp 99, 112; Luther w *Briefwechsel* v Ep 1396; H. Volz in *Festschrift für Josef Benzing* (Wiesbaden 1964) 456–75.

Greeting. The learned Eobanus gave me your letter, with two speeches, though they were very carelessly copied. I arranged for your letter to be delivered to Dorp. You will learn how things stand with me from my letter to Rhenanus, if you have time to read it. This year has not gone well for me; may Almighty God grant that better may be in store. I was most grateful for your 5
sympathy and for your kind help. Please give my greetings to Wolfgang Angst and those civilized Franconians with whom I supped on my last day, and everyone else who wishes me well. There are sparks of plague here too, but only moderate and brought in from elsewhere; there is no mischief in the atmosphere. Farewell, my most learned and civilized friend. My greetings to 10
the lawyer who regaled us with those speeches in the boat.

Louvain, 20 October
Your sincere friend Erasmus

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881

1 Eobanus] He and his friend left Mainz on 8 October for Louvain after they had learned that Erasmus had returned there; cf Krause *Eobanus* I 290–1.

7 Angst] He had recently arrived in Mainz from Basel and worked as a corrector for Johann Schöffer; his Franconian friends may have been Theoderich Zobel and Nikolaus Carbach; cf Ep 919.

8 plague] Cf Ep 847:7n.

11 lawyer] He has not been identified; cf Ep 867:47.

882 / To Maternus Hatten Louvain, 20 October 1518

Cf Ep 867 introduction and lines 32–4.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND MATERNUS, GREETING

This year, my dear Maternus, my evil genius has led me a proper dance. It would take too much time to describe it to everyone, so you must learn the story from my letter to Rhenanus. Give my cordial greetings to the dean, who can be so learned without ostentation and so civilized without insincerity; also to that charming Eucharius and the excellent Kierher and all the other canons whose conversation cheered me so much while I was with you. The young man who brings this is being sent to Basel at my own expense for the sake of the copy for the New Testament. Farewell, dear Maternus, most faithful of friends.

Louvain, 20 October 1518

Please let me have the Christian name and surname of the dean.

883 / To Nikolaus Gerbel Louvain, 20 October 1518

This letter was first printed in the *Farrago*; for the contents cf Ep 867 introduction and lines 23–8. Nikolaus Gerbel lived at Strasbourg as legal adviser and secretary to the cathedral chapter. He also frequently assisted Matthias Schürer, the printer; cf Epp 224:49n, 342 introduction.

ERASMUS TO NIKOLAUS GERBEL, DOCTOR OF CANON LAW, GREETING

What a dance my evil genius has led me this year just as he pleased, my learned Gerbel! You will learn the sad story of my misfortunes from my letter to Beatus Rhenanus. I am still in the surgeon's hands and confined to the

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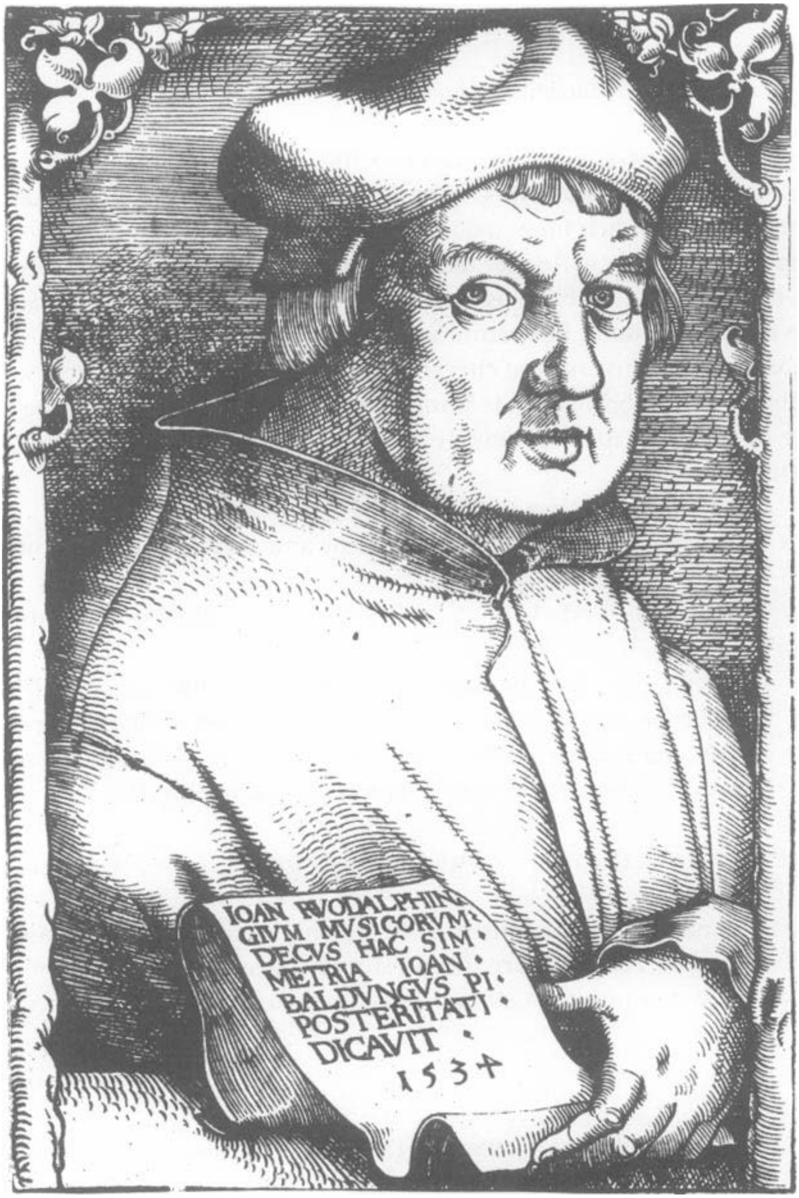
882

4 dean] Thomas Truchsess

6 Eucharius] Eucharius Gallinarius (Henner) of Bretten in the Palatinate. He studied in Heidelberg from 1475 and received his MA in 1479. In 1500 he was at Strasbourg, but in 1502 he moved to Speyer, where he subsequently became a canon. He contributed a letter in support of Erasmus to *Epistolae aliquot eruditorum virorum, ex quibus perspicuum quanta sit Eduardi Lei virulentia* (Basel: Froben August 1520; cf Ep 1083 introduction). In the title of Hermannus Buschius' reply, in the same collection, he is described as professor of canon law and pastor of the Holy Cross (at St Germanus' church) in Speyer.

6 Kierher] Johann Kierher, another canon at Speyer; see Ep 355.

8 young man] Menard of Hoorn; see Ep 885:2n.


IOAN RVODALPHIN-
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Johann Rudolfinger
Woodcut by Hans Baldung Grien, 1534
Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich

house. Christ will grant better things when we deserve them, or rather in his own good time. In all these troubles I have kept my spirit unbroken. I wish I could hear that my friend Schürer had recovered. Please greet the whole society, especially Sturm and then Gebwiler and Rudolfinger, who with their habitual generosity wished me to have nothing to pay in the inn, as though they had not done enough by honouring and amusing me with their company. You know already, I expect, that Bruno Amerbach too has found a bedfellow. I hope the affair you have begun with such promise will have a most promising outcome. Be sure to give my greetings to my new friend Pathodius; in this respect I grow richer day by day. I have had a visit from Helius Eobanus, a pleasant man, in verse recalling the fluency of Ovid and much the same in prose. He had come all the way from Erfurt merely to set eyes on my humble self. I approve his motive; his kind action I do not approve, the sort that is a burden to the doer without benefit to the recipient. The air here is still clear; there have been a few sufferers, but the infection has come in from elsewhere. Farewell, my beloved Gerbel, and keep Erasmus' name among your friends; believe me, this will be repaid.

Louvain, 20 October 1518

884 / To Hermannus Buschius Louvain, 21 October [1518]

Buschius had returned to Cologne in 1518 (cf Ep 866:35). When Erasmus returned from Basel Buschius met him at Speyer (cf Ep 877:18) and was probably then in search of a teaching position. Back in Louvain, Erasmus heard rumours that Baerland might resign from the Latin professorship at the Collegium Trilingue (cf Ep 852:82n). When his resignation actually took place a year later, Buschius apparently came to Louvain but found that the position had been given to another candidate; (cf Ep 1050; de Vocht CTL I 448–9, 482–3;

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8 recovered] See Ep 801:23n.

9 society] For the members of the Strasbourg literary society see Ep 302.

12 Amerbach] He married Anna Schabler in September 1518; see Ep 604:12n.

13 affair] When Erasmus passed through Strasbourg in September, Gerbel had announced his marriage, or at least his engagement; cf AK II Ep 628.

15 Pathodius] Lukas Hackfurt, called Bathodius (d 1554). At Strasbourg he was for some time vicar at the cathedral. Later he directed a private school and in 1523 became almoner to the Reformed city (cf AK II Ep 775 n1). As his chosen name, Bathodius, is apparently derived from the greek βάτος, the spelling is awkward. Erasmus preferred 'Pathodius,' which is more compatible with the Greek language but implies another meaning.

20 infection] Cf Ep 881:8–10.

Buschius' interest in this position may also be reflected in Epp 722, 1050–1). The year must be 1518 because the letter is copied into the Deventer Letter-book; cf the preface.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND BUSCHIUS, GREETING

I had heard hints privately that Baerland, who holds the Latin chair, was thinking of resigning, because he was tired of the work and dissatisfied with the exiguous salary. I raised the question with him and found this was not the case. I had already written to the executors of the will to say that, if they had not deputed this task to Baerland, I had found a man well able to carry that department. So I was disappointed. Yet I should like to have you living here; but the pay here is mean. However, Fortune may smile on you elsewhere. The bishop of Liège has a special love of scholars. So has the abbot of St Hubert's, a man of wonderful generosity. Hoogstraten was here before my return; some suspect that he means to settle here. Farewell, dearest Buschius, and love your Erasmus in return, as he loves you.

Louvain, 21 October

885 / To Johann Froben Louvain, 22 October [1518]

The original of this letter in Erasmus' own hand is in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel, MS G II 13a f 52. A copy in the Deventer Letter-book ends with line 23, the rest being afterthoughts to some of the topics mentioned in the first part.

Erasmus appears somewhat angry and impatient (cf Ep 886:30), but his frankness attests to the strengthening of friendly ties during the summer months spent in Froben's house. There was first of all the old problem of how Erasmus should be compensated for his collaboration with the Basel press (see Ep 629:7n). One of his requests had been agreed to: apparently a sum had been specified to pay him for the revised New Testament (cf Ep 864). In consideration of this sum (cf Ep 886:25–7) Erasmus was to receive expensive Greek books

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5 executors of the will] For the will of Jérôme de Busleyden, which provided for the Collegium Trilingue, cf Ep 691 introduction. The executors named in the will included Jan Robyns (Ep 178:9n), Jan Stercke (Ep 1322), and Bartholomeus van Vessem (Ep 1046). Antoon Sucket (Ep 1331) was added to these subsequently, while Gilles de Busleyden represented the family; see de Vocht CTL I 44, 50–62.

9 Liège] Erard de la Marck (cf Ep 738); for his esteem for scholars cf Ep 746.

10 abbot] Nicolas de Malaise; see Ep 894.

10 Hoogstraten] See Ep 849:22n.

from Italy and other books as requested. He had given Froben a list. Franz Birckmann, who regularly did business with Froben, was to supply the books in Louvain, but what he produced did not satisfy Erasmus. In the second place this letter comments on the internal problems of Froben's firm. Froben's partner, Wolfgang Lachner, had recently died (cf Ep 781:8n) and was survived by his wife, Ursula, a son not in the book trade, and six daughters, three of whom were to die from the plague in September 1519. The oldest, Gertrud, was the wife of Johann Froben. Lachner's heirs must have owned something like a controlling interest in Froben's business; hence Erasmus' fear of petticoat government (line 18; cf AK II Ep 643). Finally his reference to the donkeys (line 33; Ep 902A:7) requires an explanation. After Lachner's death Johann Schabler, called Wattenschnee, (cf Epp 330:15n, 1508) acquired a stake in the Froben firm and subsequently also acquired Lachner's bookstore. He was the head of a closely knit group of book-sellers who distributed Froben's products in France much in the same way as the Birckmann brothers did in the Netherlands and probably in England. Schabler's daughter had recently married Bruno Amerbach, Froben's assistant (cf Ep 883:12–13). In the opinion of Beatus Rhenanus, Erasmus' trusted friend, Schabler resembled Lachner in that both were more interested in profit than in scholarship. As Beatus had quarrelled with Lachner (see Ep 594 introduction), so he was to quarrel with Schabler; cf Ep 1014; Bietenholz *Basle and France* 28–30; Grimm *Buchführer* 1366–7.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND JOHANN FROBEN, GREETING

I send by the bearer of this, Menard of Hoorn, the whole remaining text of the New Testament. I also send arguments to be put one at the head of each Epistle, and shall soon send the rest. It is for you to see that the work comes out successfully. Let me know if any answer has come from Rome to what I wrote by Pucci. I have had your letter. As to the books, not a word from Franz; it was a mistake to entrust him with the valuation, and you have bought few Greek books. I think you must have lost the list of those which I had ordered to be purchased. You send me back the bill I had told you to give

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885

2 Menard of Hoorn] A young man sent to Basel with printer's copy and letters (cf Ep 867 introduction). Following a previous agreement and Erasmus' recommendation (lines 26–30), Froben employed him on the New Testament (cf Ep 864 introduction), but he died of the plague before 5 December; cf Ep 904:18–20; AK II Ep 642:13–14; Bierlaire *La familia* 54.

3 arguments] See Ep 894 introduction.

4 the rest] Cf lines 25–6; perhaps sent at the time of Ep 902A.

6 by Pucci] See Epp 860, 864 introductions.

8 few Greek books] Among them probably the Herodotus mentioned in Ep 841:3n

to Arnold, having I suppose forgotten what I asked you to do. This is no way to treat a friend and fellow-godfather.

If you want anything done about the lexicon, get the things copied out that were added by Cono, I think in Bruno's old lexicon. Then send me the manuscript lexicon of rhetorical terms, and also Mazzocchi's lexicon printed at Ferrara, which is not to be found here anywhere. I will do my best for your benefit. See to it that you collaborate for your share. You have the reputation; it can be very profitable for you if you take the necessary care on your side. But I do not like that petticoat government in your household. How can a dancer of hornpipes pull his weight in the boat? As for those Paris people, there is no risk if you show yourself a man. Here is a piece of news, so have your reward for the bearer of it ready. Your friend Cavillotus alias Dissutus is a Franciscan in Bruges, a great luminary of the church. Write a line to him if there is anything you want.

This trouble and expense was quite unnecessary, if you had tackled the business in good time. I will soon send the rest; that is, the prefaces and the appendices. The young man who brings this seems to be able, with a fair knowledge of Latin and Greek, and lastly he is a Hollander. He comes to you in hopes of a place in your printing works with a reasonable salary. Make him feel that even a recommendation from me has done some good. Though what I did was done at your request.

I urge you most emphatically in the name of our friendship not to neglect the reputation enjoyed by your press, and not to take advice from

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10 Arnold] Probably Arnold Birckmann (d 1541/2 in Cologne), the brother, partner, and successor of Franz; cf Grimm *Buchführer* 1528–30. For his bill see Ep 829:2n.

12 lexicon] No Greek lexicon had been published in Basel so far, and Froben was apparently considering such an edition. Erasmus reminds him of Johannes Cono or Conon (Ep 318:21n), the Greek teacher of the Amerbach sons, who had provided them with manuscript translations of Greek authors (cf AK II Ep 571) and evidently written notes into Bruno's Greek lexicon. Erasmus further mentions G.M. Tricaglio's *Dictionum Graecarum thesaurus* (Ferrara: G. Mazzocchi del Bondino or Maciochius 27 September 1510). The latter did in fact serve as a basis for the first Greek lexicon to be published in Basel: *Dictionarium Graecum, ultrà Ferrariensem aeditionem locupletatum*, ed V. Curio (Basel: A. Cratander 1519).

19 dancer] Cf *Adagia* III ii 55.

19 Paris people] Probably a reference to Jean Petit's intention to reprint the Jerome edition; see Ep 802.

21 Cavillotus alias Dissutus] He is not identified; *dissutus* means 'with his mouth wide open.'

donkeys. Listen to Beatus; he is the only man of any sense. I gave this young Menard four gold florins and one franc; please give instructions for me to be reimbursed by Franz. I have had enough to do at my own expense and at my own risk, as you will learn from my letter to Beatus. Farewell, dearest fellow-godfather, you and your wife and all the family.

Louvain, 22 October

To Master Johann Froben the celebrated printer. In Basel

Get Beatus to read this with you, or someone else who understands Latin.

886 / To Cuthbert Tunstall — Louvain, 22 October 1518

After completing a bundle of letters to friends along the Rhine route (cf Ep 867 introduction), Erasmus now turned to his English friends (Epp 886–93, 895). His letters to them are often repetitive, so that complete annotation is unnecessary. Erasmus' main concern was his own future. Early in the year he had planned to go to England in the autumn, possibly to stay (cf Ep 834 introduction), but his health, uncertainty about the terms offered to him by Wolsey and the king (lines 49–52), and the renewal of the French offer in the recently received Ep 810 made it advisable to postpone the journey. Thus he owed his English friends an explanation. See further Ep 964 introduction.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND TUNSTALL, GREETING

This year my evil genius has led me a proper dance. I made a most difficult journey to Basel, both from unsuitable companions (for by some fate I had fallen in with a party of Hollanders) and from the heat, which was oppressive for the time of year. In Basel I was ill almost all the time, first with a most pestilent phlegm, of which many people in those parts died, and then with stomach trouble and a dangerous looseness of the bowels. I would have given a great deal at that moment for reliable health, which would have

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34 four gold florins and one franc] The four gold coins are undoubtedly Burgundian philippus florins, which then would have been worth 16s 8d gros Flemish = 12s od sterling = £5 5s od tournois. The 'franc' was probably not the old French gold coin nor a French livre tournois, but the Burgundian livre d'Artois = 40d or 3s 4d gros Flemish, in silver coins. Cf CWE 1 318, 320, 347; Ep 608:8n.

36 my letter to Beatus] Ep 867

886

2 difficult journey] See Epp 829:9–21, 843 introduction.

5 ill] See Ep 847:7n.

allowed me to finish my task properly. Latimer's notes were very late in reaching me; otherwise they would have been most welcome, but my own notes were finished, and some part of Mark. I wish he had done the same in the Epistles of the apostles. When I left Basel, I was still rather weak; but the rest of the sad story of my misfortunes you will learn from my letter to Beatus, of which I have sent a copy to your part of the world. I had decided to visit England before the winter, and for that reason was in a hurry to leave Basel; but Fate thought otherwise. I am still in the surgeon's hands on account of two sore places, but the third is almost healed over.

Today I have sent a man at my own expense to Basel with the rest of the copy and my arguments to the apostolic Epistles, which you advised me to add; and I shall soon send the prefaces and tail-pieces. The work comes to more than a hundred six-leaf quires, though, as the paper is larger, each page contains ten lines more than in the previous edition. I had ordered one to be printed on vellum, and he has struck off three. One will reach you at the earliest possible moment, for the whole thing will be finished by January. When Froben wanted to make an agreement with me, I told him to spend the money he had intended to give me on seeing that the work was properly done. The Amerbachs are extremely skilled in this art, and I persuaded them by urgent entreaties to help with the corrections; for I felt that my servant Jacobus, whom I had taken to Basel with this in mind, would not in fact be much use, and as for Froben, nothing more stupid can be imagined.

From the bankers I received sixty francs against your bill on my return to Louvain. Now that I am disentangled from that task, I mean to finish the paraphrases, if Christ so please. I have had a visit in Louvain from a Dominican who has edited an eightfold psalter; I mentioned him to his credit

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9 Latimer's notes] At long last (cf Epp 520:21–2, 540:9–25) Latimer had produced some notes for the New Testament, but apparently only on the Gospels, and when they reached Erasmus the printing had progressed too far for them to be used; cf Ep 864 introduction.

13 letter to Beatus] Ep 867

18 a man] Menard; cf Ep 885:2n.

19 arguments] See Ep 894 introduction.

21 hundred] The text volume has fifty-eight quires of six leaves, the annotations forty-nine.

23 on vellum] See Ep 848:10n.

25 agreement] It seems that one was made but did not involve a cash payment, only the provision of books; thus Erasmus could state that he had travelled to Basel at his own expense; cf Ep 885 introduction and line 35.

29 Jacobus] Nepos; cf Ep 864 introduction.

31 sixty francs] A gift from Tunstall; see Ep 832:8n.

33 paraphrases] See Ep 916 introduction.

34 Dominican] Agostino Giustiniani; see Ep 906:529n.

in my *Apologia*, a fact which did not escape him. His work being quite unsaleable, he goes to and fro presenting it to men in great position, and so makes more by it than he ever could across the counter. He has a salary of eight hundred francs from the king of France. My chancellor has died in Spain, on whom the main of my hopes was pinned. His chaplain writes that, had he lived another three months, your friend Erasmus would have been amply provided for. I have another invitation from France, as you will learn from Budé's letter, of which I send you a copy; it was written about 13 April and reached me about 1 September. In it I sense a lack of ordinary human feeling, but this offends me less than it might, because I know his nature intimately. I send you also a copy of the letter which annoyed him so much. Lefèvre begins to grow milder, and I hope that we shall make it up. There were people in Germany who were starting to grumble; but they laid off, terrified by the example of Lefèvre, when they saw that their Erasmus was not wholly toothless. I do not see myself as a newly fledged guest in France and would gladly know what I may hope for from England. I am getting older, and my energy grows less. If I could have the further hundred marks which the king offered me long ago, I should not seek for any more. Here I have nothing to hope for. Nowhere in the world are liberal studies more despised or worse looked-after. My Suetonius has appeared, a rather majestic book, and so has Quintus Curtius. The *Institutio principis christiani* has been reprinted, so has the *Enchiridion* with some additions, and a supplement to my correspondence, selected by Beatus. My *Apologia* has been

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38 chancellor] Jean Le Sauvage; cf Epp 608:19n, 852:72n. His chaplain was Pierre Barbier, whose letter is not preserved.

42 Budé's letter] Ep 810

45 letter which annoyed him] Ep 778

46 make it up] Cf Ep 721 introduction.

51 the further hundred marks] Cf Ep 694:11n.

54 Suetonius] See Epp 648 introduction, 801:15.

55 Quintus Curtius] See Ep 704.

55 *Institutio*] See Ep 853.

56 *Enchiridion*] See Ep 858.

57 supplement] The *Auctarium selectarum aliquot epistolarum Erasmi* (Basel: J. Froben August 1518), a small collection of 63 letters not formerly printed. In a prefatory letter addressed to Michael Hummelberg (CWE 3 352–3), Beatus Rhenanus took full responsibility for the selection of letters to be released to the printer, but made it clear that the selection was made while Erasmus was present in Basel; thus few readers would assume that he had not approved Beatus' choice. In fact, Erasmus had long planned a new edition of his correspondence (Epp 634, 783:32–4) and took the Deventer Letter-book with him to Basel when he went there to see the New Testament through the press (cf the preface to this volume). In Basel letters were included in the *Auctarium*

published afresh, with some additions; I am sending you a copy. Farewell, most learned Tunstall, and think kindly of your Erasmus, as you always do.

Louvain, 22 October 1518

A little before I left Louvain, Lee, with whom I had been on friendly terms, ceased, I know not on whose instigation, to be my friend. He began to make some notes on my New Testament, which he thought of great importance, while to me they seemed just the opposite, except in one or two places. Yet I took this as kindly meant, though I understood that he had boldly declared to some regular canon or other, an ignorant man who had nothing to do with the question, that I had written something extremely risky in saying that Christ could not be called a first principle absolutely, my view of this being that it was possible to name something of which Christ is not the first principle. He is not the first principle of the Father, while the Father is the first principle of all things absolutely. And now he is beginning to mix little spurts of indignation in with his notes, in the most stupid way, where he had not understood what I wrote. I made myself clear on these points and told him to remember that the man he was correcting was only a human being, and that he was such another. Next he ceased to correct me any more, but after we parted he spread the story that he had marked a couple of hundred places; and he is planning some move against me, I know not what. He has not come to see me, nor does he send greetings. He is a good enough fellow, but very fond of his own opinions, irritable by nature and a careless talker. He thought he knew all the answers about the genealogy of Christ in St Luke, as if he had found a flagrant blunder,

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until the very end of Erasmus' stay, the latest, Ep 861, bearing a slightly later date than Beatus' letter to Hummelberg, which, incidentally, makes a friendly reference to Tunstall (cf also CWE 3 349). In marked contrast to the next following selection, the *Farrago* of October 1519 (cf Ep 1009 introduction), the *Auctarium* on the whole avoided controversial issues; see P.G. Bietenholz in *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 8 Supplement (1977) 61–78.

57 *Apologia*] The *Apologia ad Fabrum*; cf Ep 778 introduction.

61 Lee] The name is in Greek; cf the preface to this volume and Ep 843 introduction.

67 I had written] In the first edition of the New Testament, 1516. In the second edition, 1518–19, Erasmus' translation and annotation of John 8:25 in conjunction with the beginning of John were still more uncompromising. They take up much space in his future controversies with Lee; cf LB VI 335–9, 375–6, IX especially 173–4. See further Ep 1072 introduction.

81 genealogy of Christ] Cf Luke 3:23–38. In this sentence Erasmus meant to refer to Pseudo-Philo (see Ep 784:54n) rather than Josephus. Joseph is the name in Luke 3:23 around which the controversy hinged. The text edited by Giovanni Nanni ('Annius') is termed unsatisfactory rather than spurious; see LB VI 243D,

whereas in my discussion I am careful to leave the responsibility with Josephus and Annius, his authority. On my return to Basel I went into the thing at leisure and found Lee was completely wrong. Farewell once more.

887 / To Richard Pace Louvain, 22 October 1518

For this letter cf Ep 886 introduction. It was published in the *Farrago*.

TO RICHARD PACE, FIRST SECRETARY OF HIS SERENE MAJESTY THE KING OF ENGLAND, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

For me this whole year has been very black; may Christ of his goodness send brighter successors. The long Iliad of my misfortunes you will learn in part from my letter to Beatus, of which I have sent a copy to Tunstall. I am now waiting with my mouth open for the return of your library and am pitifully afraid that those things of mine will have disappeared. Your book is being read eagerly in Germany, though it offends some of the good people of Constance, because you seem to strip them of their education and credit them with drunkenness instead. I had decided to visit you this autumn, to take up the offer made of his own accord by your generous king. The chancellor being dead, there is nothing to be hoped for from my own people. In France I have no wish to find myself a newly arrived guest. If I could add what the king offers me, I should look for nothing further. Linacre's translation of Galen at last begins to be on sale here, and I like it exceedingly.

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IX 154–5, and 'Apologia invectivis Lei' *Opuscula* 243–5 (with additional details about the events mentioned here).

887

4 Iliad] Cf *Adagia* I iii 26.

5 Tunstall] See Ep 886:13–14.

6 return] Apparently lost between Italy and England, it had included a manuscript with the beginning of Erasmus' *Antibarbari:* see Epp 706:38n, 787:21–3.

7 Your book] *De fructu* (see Ep 776:4n). In his three prefaces Pace stated that *De fructu* was composed in an inn at Constance where there were neither scholars nor books, a circumstance he begged his readers to remember in case they found shortcomings (cf Richard Pace *De Fructu* ed Francis Manley and Richard S. Sylvester, New York 1967, 11, 25). For the predictable reaction in Constance cf Ep 1103; *Briefwechsel der Brüder A. und Th. Blaurer* ed T. Schiess (Freiburg 1908–12) Ep 26; and a letter by Michael Hummelberg to Urbanus Rhegius, 5 April 1519, in A. Horawitz *Analecten zur Geschichte der Reformation ... in Schwaben* (Vienna 1878) Ep 19.

12 chancellor] Jean Le Sauvage

15 Galen] Cf Epp 755:32n, 868:74–8.

After this I may even be ready to become a physician. I do not like this design for a tenth from Germany. Our crafty Midases are turning the screw to some purpose. Farewell, most learned Pace. Give my greetings to Linacre and encourage him to publish the rest of his work.

Louvain, 22 October 1518

888 / To [William Blount, Lord Mountjoy] Louvain, 23 October [1518]

For this letter cf Ep 886 introduction. That Mountjoy is being addressed is inferred from a comparison between the last lines and the beginning of Ep 829.

Greeting, most generous of patrons. Who would think that this feeble body of mine could support so many trials – the difficult journeys, the intense heat (which in Basel was really intolerable), the effort and the ill health? For in Basel I was ill almost the whole time, first with a prolonged and pestilent phlegm, which in fact carried off quite a number of people, and then with stomach trouble and a dangerous looseness of the bowels. Once I was past Cologne, things went very well, and I was promising myself a happy return to such friends as I had left behind in Louvain. And lo and behold I suddenly found myself at death's door, so far robbed of all my forces that I nearly died. Only my determination never left me. I was carried to Louvain with three sore places, one under my left hip, one on my groin on the right side, and the third on my back. There was also a very hard swelling on my left groin, which has not entirely gone even now. Two surgeons assured me it was the plague. The physicians said there was no sign of sickness in my water. After a fortnight black flesh, quite dead, came away from the sores. This is now the sixth week that I am confined to the house, and I am not yet free of the surgeons. If it was plague, this at least was on my side, that I did not believe it.

If I am very late in thanking you for your generosity, the fault lies with my servant John, who gave me the impression that he remembered the money as coming from some other source. I should be glad to have news of your lordship and your lady and your son. Farewell.

Louvain, 23 October

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17 a tenth] Cf Ep 891:26n.

17 screw] Literally 'tightening the cord'; cf *Adagia* I v 67.

888

19 Very late] Cf Epp 829:2n, 895.

889 / To [John Fisher] Louvain, 23 October [1518]

For this letter cf Ep 886 introduction. Evidently an English bishop is being addressed, most likely Fisher (cf Ep 653 introduction). The bishop of Rochester was a patron of long standing (cf Ep 229 introduction) who had shown great interest in the Reuchlin controversies (see Ep 824). The letter repeats much information from Ep 867.

Greeting, my Lord Bishop. This year has led your old friend Erasmus a proper dance. I had a very difficult journey in both directions, partly because of the heat, which in Germany was intolerable, and partly through the most pestilent winds. I was still very weak when I left Basel; but I had gradually improved, so that I was in fairly good shape when I arrived to stay with the count of Neuenahr. I found him in his castle at Bedburg, four miles this side of Cologne. He is a young man of ancient family, very silent, abstemious, with a very modest and almost saintly character, and a good scholar in more than one field. What a disgraceful exchange it is, if priests and monks live devoted to their stomachs, while knights are men of high character pursuing humane studies! I also found at Boppard a customs officer who jumped for joy, exclaiming that he was a happy man because he had had the good fortune to see Erasmus. There was nothing he would not do for me. All among the documents of the customs-house he showed me the works of Erasmus. I get letters from Nürnberg, from Bohemia, from Hungary, from Poland breathing the spirit of Christ; but they are nearly all from laymen. Only monks and certain theologians like them carry on this campaign of slander.

But to speak of business: I was hoping it would be possible to revisit you this autumn, with satisfaction on both sides; but you know the sudden changes in human affairs. The moment I left the count, I was suddenly at death's door. Apart from the determination to live, there was no life in me. They carried me half-dead to Louvain, deprived of all my forces. I had three sore places, a large one under my left hip, which was made worse by riding, another in my left groin, and the third on my back. I also had a very hard lump in my left groin, and another under my right pap, which has gradually disappeared after four weeks. From the three sores there came away a black,

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889

15 letters] None such seem to be preserved.

26 left groin] This should be 'right,' as in Epp 888 and 893. Erasmus would not have made this mistake; it may be a confusion due to the transcriber of the Deventer text.

dead flesh. Both my surgeons maintained it was the plague, and still do. I refused to believe them. I have now been six weeks in the surgeons' hands – a most perilous class of men – and I sit idle at home. This was a trouble I had never experienced. Who would have thought that my feeble body could have endured all these journeys, all this sickness, this toil and care? Christ our Saviour will one day grant that things may go better. Although whatever he wishes me to bear, I will bear with fortitude, provided only – and this I hope for, relying on his goodness – that he does not allow this member, feeble though it is, to be parted from his body. It is he who is our life, if we die, and our stronghold, if we live.

The New Testament, which was quite successfully completed, will appear at the next fair. You will see my other things, or have already seen them, when they reached England. My arguments to all the Epistles of the apostles are now printing, which I wrote while I was ill. I am girding up my loins to attack the paraphrases. Hoogstraten has been driven out of Cologne and is looking for a home somewhere else. The affair developed from argument into blows. In his dialogue he attacks the count of Neuenahr. This has stirred up many military characters, his relatives and kinsmen in the neighbourhood. I think he will move to Louvain. Farewell, most saintly of bishops, and remember your humble servant Erasmus, as I know you do.

Louvain, 23 October
Erasmus etc.

890 / To Henry Bullock [Louvain, c 23 October 1518]

Cf Ep 886 introduction. This letter and Ep 891 survive only as fragments in the Deventer Letter-book since an intermediate leaf containing the end of the first and the beginning of the second is lost. For details see Allen's headnote. Bullock was a fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge; cf Ep 225:5n.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND BULLOCK, GREETING

What news of my friend Bullock? Are you still waging war with the supporters of Lefèvre? I have had one or two letters, in which you said you had written something against that spiteful crew, but what you wrote has not reached me yet …

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39 other things] See Ep 886:54–8.

42 Hoogstraten] See Epp 849:22n, 877:19n.

44 dialogue] Hoogstraten's *Apologia* (cf Ep 680:28n) took the form of a dialogue.

890

3 supporters of Lefèvre] Cf Ep 826:12–13. No records of such controversies in Cambridge seem to have survived.

891 / To John Colet Louvain, 23 October 1518

For the fragmentary character of this letter see Ep 890 introduction. Like Ep 889 it evidently began with a summary from Ep 867.

... and lo and behold at Aachen I suddenly found myself at death's door. Partly on horseback and partly on wheels I was carried to Louvain, more dead than alive, with three sore places and two severe swellings, one of which has disappeared, but the other is still there, in my left groin, and does not yet come to a head. From the three sores there came away a kind of black dead flesh. The biggest was under my left hip. The one in my right groin is almost healed over; the other two are still open. Both my surgeons assured me it was the plague; but that thanks to the troubles of my journey I was now in no danger. The physicians said there was no sign of disease in my urine. I sent for the chief among them; he repeatedly declared there were no untoward signs in the urine, but when I told him about the sores, he made off and has not reappeared. I have now been sitting idle at home for six weeks, troubled with surgeons, physicians, and druggists, which is not how I like it. You often say Erasmus is unlucky. What would you say if you could see him now, or still more, could have seen him? This was one trouble I had never experienced. Who would believe that this feeble body of mine could support such efforts, such journeys, and such sickness? Not to mention the slanderous theologians and begging monks, none of whom bark to my face but many from behind. May it be Christ's will that better times may some day come, or that my bodily ills may be brought to an end.

The New Testament will soon be out; it has gone quite well. My arguments to all the Epistles of the apostles are now in process of publication. After that I shall attack the paraphrases of the remainder. Tell me what you did not like in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. I send you a copy of the speech delivered by the general of the Friars Preacher, Cardinal Cajetanus, in the council of princes at Augsburg, where

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891

20 brought to an end] Supplying *finiantur* for the missing verb

22 arguments] See Ep 894 introduction.

23 paraphrases] See Ep 916 introduction.

24 Romans] See Ep 825:13n.

26 Cajetanus] Tommaso de Vio of Gaeta, 1469–1534 (cf Ep 256:49n). He became general of the Dominicans in 1508, cardinal in 1517, and archbishop of Palermo in 1518. Appointed legate to the emperor, he left Rome on 5 May and on 7 July entered Augsburg, where Maximilian's last diet was gathering (cf the preface to this volume). Cajetanus' immediate task was to win the princes over to the papal crusade against the Turks (cf Epp 729:56n, 785:40n), but the confronta-

the emperor is staging a very pretty play. And he persuaded the archbishop of Mainz so far to demean his own dignity as to accept the hat from him – for he is only a young man – making himself one of the Roman pontiff's monks. My dear Colet, what a topsy-turvy world we live in! Out of men we make gods and turn priesthood into tyranny. The princes, together with the pope, and I dare say the Grand Turk as well, are in league against the well-being of the common people. Christ is out of date; it is Moses we follow now. Farewell.

Louvain, 23 October 1518

892 / To Thomas Bedyll Louvain, 23 October [1518]

For this letter cf Ep 886 introduction. Thomas Bedyll (cf Ep 387) was the secretary of Archbishop Warham (see Ep 893). The financial transactions mentioned in this letter are explained in Ep 823 introduction.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND BEDYLL GREETING

Well, I am restored to you somehow, after so many perils, ending almost with shipwreck as I entered harbour. Both my surgeons steadily maintained it was the genuine plague. I have my doubts. I at least found it bad enough. I

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tion with Luther soon took precedence (cf Ep 877:12n). Cajetanus' oration to the diet proposing the levy of a tithe in Germany (cf Ep 887:16–17) to be used exclusively for the German crusaders was delivered on 5 August. In the face of fierce opposition from the estates, the emperor Maximilian made counter-proposals which amounted to a voluntary tax on everybody receiving communion, but in the end was content to see the matter stalled. Ulrich von Hutten had prepared a speech to promote the crusade as a German national enterprise and as an expression of independence from Roman tyranny. It was not given before the diet but soon appeared in print; cf Ep 951:29n; Ulmann *Maximilian I* II 713–22; Pastor VII 244–6; Holborn *Hutten* 103–6. The relevant texts are assembled in Hutten *Opera* V.

27 archbishop] The cardinal's hat was bestowed on Albert of Brandenburg by Cajetanus in the cathedral of Augsburg on 1 August, but before the ceremony the two men had quarrelled over protocol and precedent (cf Hutten *Opera* V 265–6). This quarrel between the primate of Germany and the pope's cardinal-legate may have inspired the highly nationalistic reaction of Erasmus' informant; cf Ep 904:28–9, where Albert is likewise seen as a potential check to papal interference in Germany.

31 tyranny] Cf Ep 872:20n.

33 Moses] Cf Ep 858:486n.

892

3 harbour] Cf *Adagia* I v 76.

can't think what Potkyn is up to. After my bill had been refused so many times, at length I sent my own servant over to England on purpose, with a bill which Sixtinus himself says was better written than Potkyn's. I expected the money to be forthcoming. Franz, thinking the thing a certainty, wrote me a bill against which I could draw money on his credit in Germany, having received part of the sum forthwith. When he arrived in England, Potkyn made difficulties about the bill and produced no money. He sent me a copy of an idiotic bill mentioning the year '19, whereas this annuity is for the year '18. I ask you, what makes him so difficult? Suppose no bill came into it at all: is he afraid I shall demand money twice that is only due once? I undertook such a dangerous journey and suffered from all that illness, and thanks to that bill I should have been destitute had I not found men in Germany more disposed to believe me than that Potkyn of yours. For Franz, when the money was refused, altered his bill, reasonably enough.

Please pass this on to your master, for such things go better by word of mouth than in writing; and do your best to see that the money is not deposited with Arnold. Here I shall draw it from Franz, and in future I hope his grace will prefer to act through Maruffo. Please let me know whether his grace has received the volumes of Jerome, for they often hold on to my books. If he has not had it, I will see that he gets it. Farewell, most faithful of friends.

Louvain, 23 October

893 / To [William Warham] Louvain, 24 October 1518

For this letter cf Ep 886 introduction. In accordance with Ep 892:19–20, only a passing reference is made here (lines 34–6) to the concern of that letter. For William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, who had given Erasmus the benefice at Aldington, see Ep 188 introduction.

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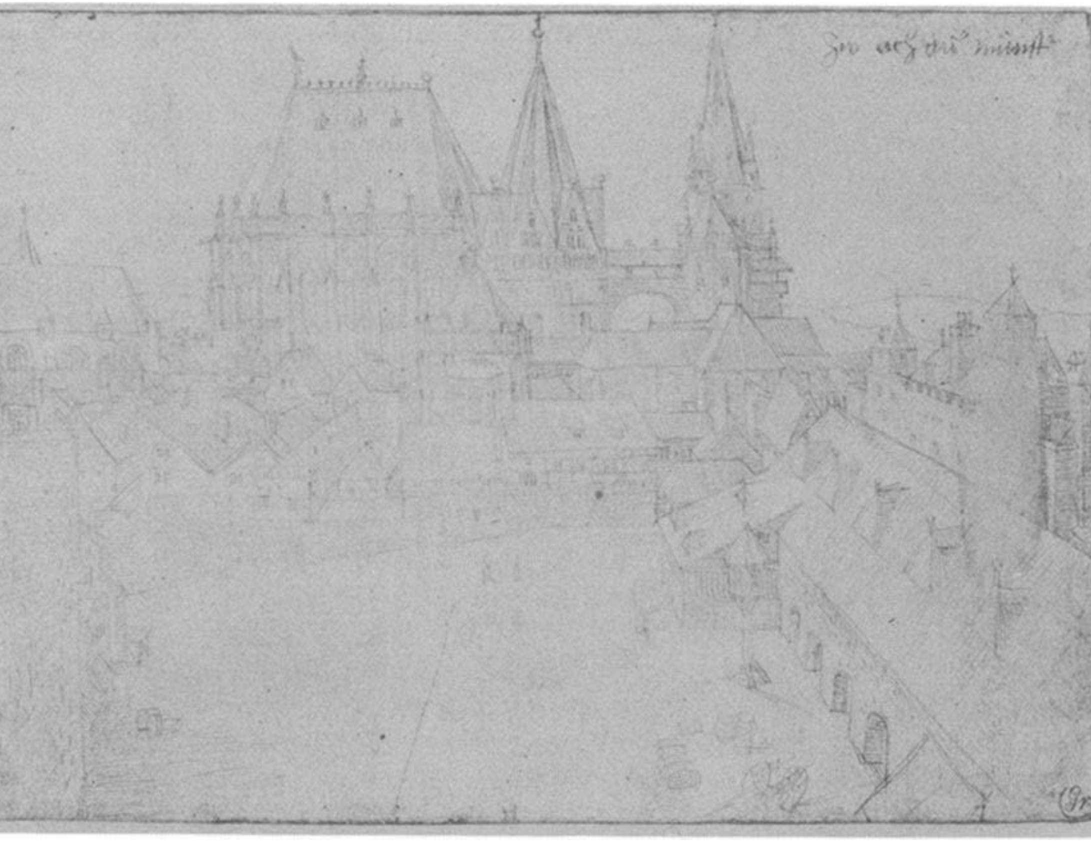
5 Potkyn] William Potkyn, a notary public serving Warham; see Ep 782:4n.

7 Sixtinus] Johannes Sixtinus, priest and notary in London, cf Ep 112 introduction.

8 Franz] Franz Birckmann, bookseller and banker; cf Ep 258:14n.

21 Arnold] Probably Arnold Birckmann (cf Epp 885:10, 895:3 and the plural used by Erasmus in line 24). He was at this time dissatisfied with the Birckmann brothers (cf Ep 885:6–7) and preferred that Raffaele Maruffo (cf Ep 387:3n) should be used in future for the transfer of the Aldington annuity.

23 Jerome] Erasmus' edition was dedicated to Warham (cf Ep 396), and he was among the first to receive a copy, although he did not receive all nine volumes at the same time (cf Epp 413:36–9, 474 postscript, 475:35–7, 543 postscript). Warham's set may still have been incomplete at this time, or he may have been ordering another.


Zw ach dz münst

View of Aachen cathedral
Drawing by Albrecht Dürer, 1520
Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

Greeting, most reverend Prelate and most generous of patrons. Though few things as a rule turn out well for me, no year has ever been as bad as this. My journey was most difficult on account of the intolerable heat. In Basel I suffered first from a prolonged and most pestilent rheum; then from stomach trouble and a most dangerous looseness of the bowels, the trouble attacking me so often that I was almost perpetually ill. If I had had no sickness, the heat was so great that the most robust constitutions could hardly endure it. On my way back I had begun to recover, and once past Cologne I was quite pleased with my progress. I was hoping for a joyful reunion with you before the winter and promised myself many different pleasures. But O the ups and downs in human affairs! Around Aachen I suddenly found myself at death's door. I was carried on a lame horse as far as Tongeren, but in such torment that I sometimes thought of throwing myself on the ground and just dying there under the open sky. From Tongeren I was taken home to Louvain in a carriage and pair more dead than alive, with three sores, one under my left hip, another in my right groin, and a third on my back. I sent for two surgeons; both said it was the plague. The physicians said there was no sign of disease in my water. There was also a very hard swollen lump in my left groin, but short of an open sore. Under my left hip it was an immense sore. Flesh that was black and dead came away from them all, but not till about three weeks had passed. I have now been in the surgeons' hands for more than six weeks, confined to the house with two sore places still open. This was one trouble I had never experienced. Who would have thought that this fragile body could have supported such troubles, so many and such difficult journeys, such laborious researches, so many diseases renewing their attacks so often with unimpaired severity? To say nothing meanwhile of certain cursed monks and several numbskull theologians, who bark like cowardly dogs when I am not there and are silent to my face.

Such is the sad history of my calamities, to which yet another was added by the death in Spain of our prince's chancellor, on whom all my hopes in this country depended, for he was my one convinced supporter. I have no spirit for a move to France, though I am often invited already. I shall be either an Englishman or a mixture of England and Brabant. I will not fail, if I have your Grace's favour. Potkyn leads me a fine dance, rejecting all bills. As far as he was concerned I might have died of hunger, for nothing could be extracted from him. In the diet at Augsburg nothing of any note has

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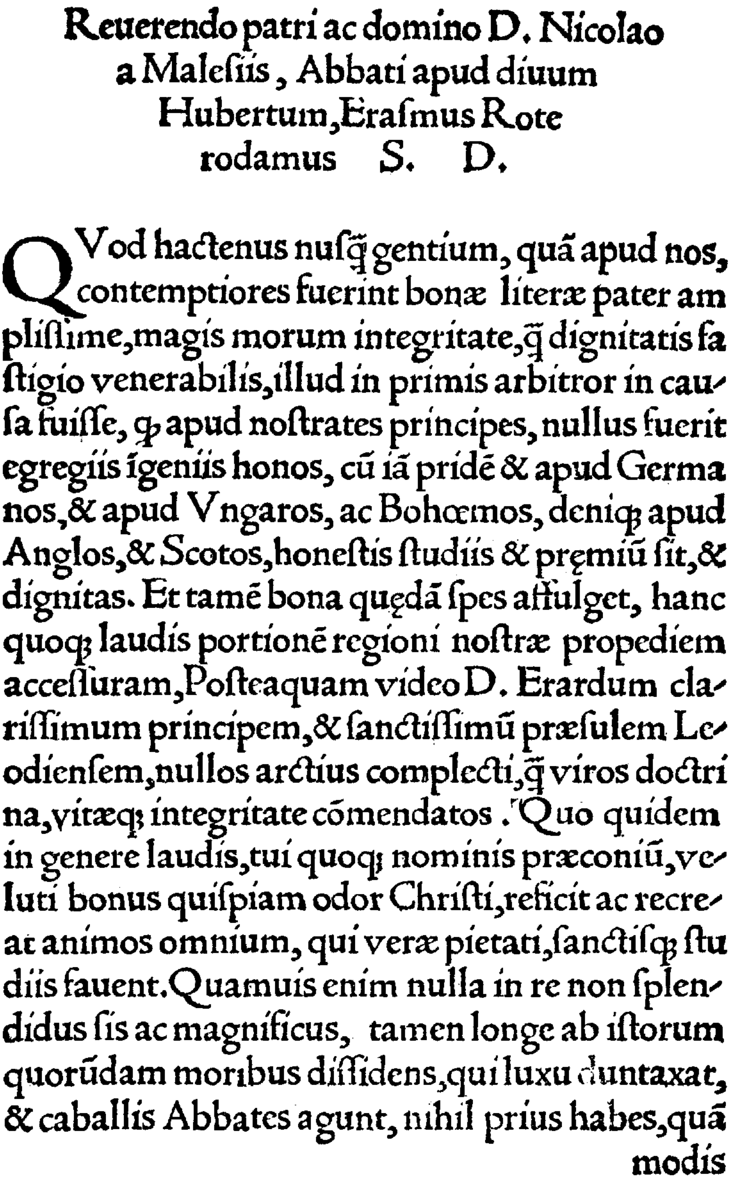
8 way back] The following is a summary of Ep 867.

30 chancellor] Jean Le Sauvage; cf Ep 852:72n.



Reuerendo patri ac domino D. Nicolao a Maleſiis, Abbati apud diuum Hubertum, Eraſmus Roterodamus S. D.

QVod hactenus nuſq̃ gentium, quã apud nos, contemptiores fuerint bonæ literæ pater ampliſſime, magis morum integritate, q̃ dignitatis faſtigio venerabilis, illud in primis arbitror in cauſa fuiſſe, ꝙ apud noſtrates principes, nullus fuerit egregiis ĩgeniis honos, cũ iã pridẽ & apud Germanos, & apud Vngaros, ac Bohœmos, deniq; apud Anglos, & Scotos, honeſtis ſtudiis & prȩmiũ ſit, & dignitas. Et tamẽ bona quȩdã ſpes affulget, hanc quoq; laudis portionẽ regioni noſtræ propediem acceſſuram, Poſteaquam video D. Erardum clariſſimum principem, & ſanctiſſimũ præſulem Leodienſem, nullos arctius complecti, q̃ viros doctrina, vitæq; integritate cõmendatos. Quo quidem in genere laudis, tui quoq; nominis præconiũ, veluti bonus quiſpiam odor Chriſti, reficit ac recreat animos omnium, qui veræ pietati, ſanctiſq; ſtudiis fauent. Quamuis enim nulla in re non ſplendidus ſis ac magnificus, tamen longe ab iſtorum quorũdam moribus diſſidens, qui luxu duntaxat, & caballis Abbates agunt, nihil prius habes, quã

modis

Erasmus *Argumenta in omneis epistolas apostolicas nova* preface
The first page, as it is found in *Ratio sive methodus …*
(Louvain: Martens November 1518)
Courtesy of the University Library, Amsterdam

happened yet, except that the young archbishop of Mainz has been given a cardinal's hat. A speech on the levying of special tithes was not very well received; I have sent Tunstall a copy. The count of Neuenahr writes to me that the diet is to be transferred to Frankfurt, and that there will be discussions there about the coronation of Ferdinand. He is rather wasting his time here. The count adds 'You will soon see the king returning from Spain.' There is a rumour that he will come to Naples, which is nearer the truth. There are flashes of plague everywhere; it has shown little virulence in Louvain, much in Cologne. My respectful best wishes to your Grace, to whom I sincerely devote myself as your humble dependant.

Louvain, 24 October 1518

894 / To Nicolas de Malaise — Louvain, 24 October 1518

This letter is a dedicatory preface for *Argumenta in omneis epistolas apostolicas nova* (Louvain: Martens November 1518; NK 2973), published together with the *Ratio verae theologiae* (cf Ep 745), but also bound and sold separately. These arguments for each Epistle had been composed together with Erasmus' original translations of the apostolic letters before September 1506 (cf Ep 384 introduction; Allen II 182). During his illness (lines 32–4; cf Ep 867) Erasmus revised the arguments for inclusion in the new edition of the New Testament (cf Ep 864). They were sent to Froben (cf Epp 885:3–4, 886:18–19) and printed in all his subsequent editions of the New Testament (also in LB VI and VII). At the same time, however, Erasmus gave them to Martens for a separate edition, which is the only source for this letter. He probably wished to show some consideration to Martens, who had nursed him in his sickness (Ep 867:211–67) at the time when he seemed to work exclusively for Froben. In adding this preface, he

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37 Mainz] See Ep 891:27n.

38 speech] See Ep 891:26n. A copy was sent to Colet. Since Tunstall was sent other enclosures (see Ep 886:42–5), a confusion of names is not impossible.

39 Neuenahr writes] Cf Ep 878 introduction. The rumours here reported reflect – apparently with some confusion as to the respective roles of Ferdinand and Charles – speculations following a pact signed at Augsburg on 27 August 1518 in which five of the seven electors had pledged themselves to elect Charles of Spain to be the Roman king, a step designed to facilitate his succeeding Maximilian as the emperor. It was hoped to hold the election in Frankfurt in the spring of 1519. Meanwhile the pope was expected to finally grant Maximilian I his long-awaited formal coronation as the Roman emperor, and Maximilian himself seems to have dreamt of his retirement to the kingdom of Naples, perhaps as administrator in the name of Prince Ferdinand, who was to be made king of Naples; cf Ulmann *Maximilian I* II 703–7.

44 plague] Cf Ep 847:7n.

wished to gratify a new patron (cf Ep 884:10), Nicolas de Malaise, who from 1503 to his death in 1538 was abbot of the Benedictines of St Hubert in the Ardennes near the frontier of Belgium and Luxembourg.

TO THE REVEREND FATHER NICOLAS DE MALAISE, LORD ABBOT OF ST HUBERT'S, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

In no country in the world have liberal studies hitherto been rated lower than our own, and the chief cause, my honoured Lord Abbot (who for all the eminence of your position are yet more to be respected for your upright life), I believe to be that among our princes no respect is paid to intellectual eminence, while in Germany, in Hungary and Bohemia, and even in England and Scotland, the humanities have long enjoyed reward and honour. And yet a bright hope dawns that in this field as well our country will soon be adding to its laurels, now that I see that noble prince and saintly bishop Erard of Liège seeking to have none about him so much as those who have learning and purity of life to recommend them. And in this field of honour the sound of your name equally, like some excellent savour of Christ, revives and refreshes the spirits of all who are devoted to true piety and sacred studies. For though in every other field you use a splendid munificence, yet (O how different from some who show themselves abbots only in their soft living and their palfries!) you think nothing more important than in every way to restore the ruined discipline of the religious life and then to consolidate and to advance it. And this you do, not so much by the exercise of your authority as by the example of your life, the most effective way there is to improve the character of those who are set under one. You pass your time, not in games of hazard but in sacred study, and not in hunting but in prayer, and by your daily sacrifices make the day, however long, seem short. But next to this is your interest in encouraging or arousing the study of Holy Scripture, since this is the spring from which all holiness of life must flow. And that these outstanding gifts in you are no pretence but true and genuine is shown by, among other things, your complete freedom from arrogance of every kind, for, with all your merits, not the least is that you seem to be the only person who is unaware of them. That is the true mark of a really Christian spirit, one that measures the stem and stern (as they say) of all its actions by the glory of Christ, to whom alone all honour is due.

Such thoughts as these, reverend Father, were the brands that kindled

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894

11 Erard] Erard de la Marck; cf Epp 746, 884:9.

13 savour of Christ] Cf 2 Cor 2:15.

30 stem and stern] Cf Ep 858:474n.

the fire of my affection for you, the more so as Paschasius Berselius had painted me an enthusiastic word-picture of you; and so I wished that the little book containing arguments to all the apostolic Epistles, which I have made these last few days while detained at home by illness, should go forth into the world under your auspices; not that I thought you had any need of this work of mine, but because it seemed appropriate to dedicate to a champion of true religion a work that has the encouragement of true religion as its goal. After the majesty of the Gospels, what should we treasure more than the Epistles of the apostles, which show us marvellous flashes of the fresh and primitive spirit of the early church? There are indeed arguments made by the Greeks, but these seemed to me to have been not so much written as thrown together by some ignoramus, and so the versions I made long ago of these have been allowed to lapse; those of uncertain authorship which circulate in some manuscripts in Latin are thin and barren. I have made versions of the Epistles of the apostles, somewhat more lucid, I think, and in fact more faithful than their predecessors. I have added notes in which not a few difficulties are cleared up. I have tried also to throw light by a paraphrase, and this work, which I began recently, will soon with Christ's help be finished and published. After which, if the favour of Heaven will second my desires, I hope to finish the commentary which I started long ago, and so to kindle many people to the study of these life-giving texts, who are now deterred, many by the unfamiliar language, some by the corruption of the copies, and others by the obscurity of the subject-matter. Farewell, excellent Father, and henceforth write the name of Erasmus in the list of those devoted to you.

Louvain, from the College of the Lily, 24 October 1518

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34 word-picture] During his recent visit to Louvain (cf Ep 867:275). It was most likely Berselius, a Benedictine in the confidence of Erard de la Marck, who had brought about the connection between Erasmus and Malaise.

42 arguments] A traditional set of introductions in Greek to each of the Pauline Epistles. No more is known about Erasmus' translation of them. Another set of very short and elementary prefaces is found in many printed editions of the Latin vulgate. It also appeared in the New Testament of 1516 but was subsequently replaced by Erasmus' own arguments.

50 paraphrase] See Epp 710, 916. The paraphrases took the place of the earlier planned commentary on Romans and other Epistles, but as late as 1524 Erasmus was still expressing the hope that this latter project would be realized, perhaps partly because it must have been among his earliest; cf Epp 164:39–46, 301:20–2, 685:25; Allen I 42:8–10.

895 / To John Smith Louvain, 25 October [1518]

For this letter cf Ep 886 introduction. John Smith was formerly in Erasmus' service; for his return to England see Ep 820 introduction. This is the last of the letters preserved in the Deventer Letter-book; cf the preface to this volume.

ERASMUS TO JOHN SMITH, GREETING

I wonder very much why you told me that twelve angels had been paid over by More and committed to Arnold. Relying on what you said I accepted a bill from him, which afterwards I was obliged to change. Let me know how you are. I have been more than once in great danger of death. Mind you serve your master faithfully and avoid bad company. Above all, never run the risk of catching the French pox by contact with anyone. Never forget Christ, but pay your duty to him sincerely every day. If there is anything I can do for you here, I will do it gladly. Farewell, dearest John.

Louvain, 25 October

896 / From Guillaume Budé Paris, 31 October [1518]

This melodramatic letter may seem an unjustified reaction to Erasmus' Ep 869, which was certainly not friendly but sounds no more offensive than many other remarks exchanged earlier in the correspondence with Budé. Towards the end of Ep 810 Budé had made a considerable effort to restate in cordial terms the king's invitation to Paris, and he may have resented the fact that Erasmus' answer made no reference to it, although Erasmus had promised a further letter in the near future. At any rate, lines 102–4, 114–15, and the postscript show clearly that Budé did not seriously intend to sever his relations with Erasmus. Fortunately Erasmus saw this at once (cf Epp 906:269–71, 931:21–2), but less happily he still insisted on examining Budé's arguments one by one in Ep 906. This letter was published in the *Farrago*.

FROM GUILLAUME BUDÉ, HIS ERSTWHILE FRIEND, TO ERASMUS WITH BEST WISHES, AND NEVER AGAIN

I remember once when writing to you I said something like 'I know you as well as you know me.' How very wide of the mark I was I now understand for the first time, after reading right through that ill-tempered letter you

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895

3 by More] The confusion is explained in Ep 829:2n.

896

3 I said] Ep 493:241–2

wrote me from Louvain, when you were, I imagine, not yet restored to your true self after the troubles of that illness, or at least not restored to *me*. I used to hope that the Graces had given it their blessing when I struck up my friendship with you – you who were in any case a great lover of wit and humour, and not only a master of courtesy but one who fully understands a joke and knows how to take one, with whom I could let my pen run on just as I pleased with no risk to the smooth course of the friendship contracted and by now established between us. One more disappointment! I now see that I am clumsy, absurd, preposterous, obtuse, hard to get on with as a companion, and a proper blunderer, one who must be avoided and kept away with jests that are barbed and double-edged and full of menace, like a bull with hay tied round his horns. For so I am resolved to believe, since you and your friends, good men and true, have so decided, whose judgment I rate of course far above my own. Nor do I see any future in defending myself, for I cannot attempt to deny a charge of which you for your part have so often suspected me before now, while to your friends I am clearly guilty; or in begging to be excused from these malevolent suspicions, for I have no hope of dislodging the opinion fixed in the hearts of either yourself or your friends. Suppose I tried to do this, when you have already prejudged the case: I should perhaps incur another charge, of impudence this time, especially as, if I tried to plead my case with you on the bench, my empty verbiage (you make this abundantly clear) would win little credit and carry no weight, for the time of the court, as the phrase goes, is reserved for solid arguments, with which on your own showing I am very ill supplied.

Up to this point I have a clear grasp of the sense of your letter and have decided not to appeal against the interpretation you and your friends put upon the case, however unfair it may be to me, either to the friends we share or to my own friends to whom you refer me; though their opinion on this subject is as wrong-headed as mine, which means it is quite opposed to the view of those friends of yours. When however you say that competition in abuse is beneath you and you take no pleasure in quibbling, what that has to do with me I do not see; for I cannot think you so indignant that you mean this to refer to me. And yet, for fear that this sore place may spread, since as far as I can see there is no dispersing it, my view is that we must use the knife, which means that we must be satisfied with mutual silence for the future: you are to suppress my prolix letter (as you call it, meaning needlessly verbose

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17 bull] Cf *Adagia* I i 81; a bad-tempered animal had a warning wisp of hay tied on his horns.

28 time of the court] Cf *Adagia* I iv 73; Epp 810:356, 867:21n.

41 prolix letter] Ep 810, described as prolix in Ep 869:3.

and tedious), and indeed tear it up if you like or bury it in live coals among the ashes, and in reply to yours (which is already published, as I saw today for the first time) I will hold my tongue and cause you no further trouble. But why you went for me like that I do not see, if you wished me not to answer. You have prescribed silence: very well, I accept, and will keep silence, if you allow me to do so. I must be a marvellously foolish and stupid listener; but though I have often read that ill-starred and accursed letter of mine since I got yours, even after all this length of time, as I go over it again and hear myself reading it, I cannot detect that poison of malevolence – call it what you please – which offends you so much. Which makes me realize how absurd is my judgment and how keen is yours.

But in heaven's name, was it the first part of my letter that gave you such offence, where I speak of your difference with Lefèvre, or the second part, in which I put the king's offer to you? If it was the former, why write me such a long letter, provoking me with such powerful arguments to reply? When I replied to that letter, I supposed that I should make you find the business satisfactory. What is there about it, for pity's sake, which to an experienced and acute observer would not redound to your credit? Could I of all people wish to criticize you or give my support to anyone except Erasmus? Away with such an unpleasant suggestion! All the more so since Lefèvre has never mentioned the subject to me, although he has often spoken with me in the mean while. But when I saw that the victory in that dispute was awarded to Erasmus by every fairminded person, but with the proviso that they were saying you wished to press your victory to excessive lengths and had not sufficiently taken account of your own position and your opponent's, I wished to give you a picture of the position in my letter; I wished to offer you both consolation and excuse on this account, that you would have suffered a common human experience if (as does happen) you had grown unduly warm in the course of a dispute – a fault from which even your hero Jerome was not free. I wanted also to wean you from the opinion you appeared to hold and to turn you away from thoughts of opening a campaign from which the humanities and sacred studies could only suffer.

At the same time I do not deny one thing: your letters give me such pleasure that I enjoy sharpening your pen even against myself and provoking you to write. So that even in that letter which has caused so much mischief my object was to turn the force of your attack against myself,

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43 published] Ep 778, published recently in the *Auctarium*
48 accursed letter of mine] Ep 810
56 a long letter] Ep 778
71 Jerome] Cf Epp 778:266–71, 810:123–8.

although in fact I have found your indignation very hard to bear, for you were in a bad temper when you wrote me a mere note. Nor have I ever taken offence at anything you have said in your other letters to me, though there are passages in them which certain of my friends felt to carry more innuendo than our friendship or your natural caution would seem to warrant. I am so far from agreeing with them that I do not suppose, even in the future, I have to fear anything too outrageous. In fact I sometimes enjoy being chastised by a man as dear to me as you, with a lash so skilful and well directed that my friends make fun of my weals for many days afterwards. I am quite willing to accept pardon for any offence I may have given you, on this condition, that you enjoy yourself to the top of your bent in trouncing your friend, provided the punishment is worthy of us both; for I do not think all scholars taken together have such high standards as you and your friends.

If however what distresses you is what I said in my letter about the king's proposal, on the ground that in a serious matter I seem to be making a fool of you, I at least, as far as that goes, seem to be making a fool not of you but of myself. I want you to be clear about this: such was your reputation at the time in the inner circle of the court that, when it was suspected that you were rejecting the royal offer with much hesitation because you feared the most illustrious Prince Charles might be offended, the king of France in his eagerness to have you was prepared to write to the prince on this subject, had you said anything of the sort by way of excuse.

Then there are other things which it would take too long to set down – nor should they perhaps be entrusted to a letter – but which impelled me all the same to write a letter like this, so far at least as this subject is concerned. If however you have had the idea of renouncing your friendship with me for several months, until your feelings against me have cooled down, this is not a sufficient reason why you should not write to the bishop of Paris, for I am quite ready for this business to be put through without my presence as arbiter or go-between. And please understand that my criticisms stem from a certain lack of tact and not from malice (which I fancy you will do quite willingly, if your friends would permit it), and do not love me any the less than you have all this long time; for I can see that it goes against the grain to take this hostile line with me. As I hope for the favour of heaven, I wish all

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79 a mere note] Ep 869

92 king's proposal] In Ep 810:400–89 Budé had made it clear that Erasmus was still welcome at Paris and could expect attractive conditions if he chose to come, but at the same time he had cast some doubt both on Erasmus' motives for delaying a decision and on his own determination to act as an honest broker in this matter; cf Ep 906:100n.

105 bishop of Paris] Etienne Poncher

may go well with you and rejoice at your safe return to Louvain. There was a constant rumour here that you had moved to Rome or Milan. I greeted Glareanus for you, who came to see me today. Farewell; and when you think you have hated me long enough, resume your affection for me.

Paris, 31 October, having received your letter yesterday, bad luck to it!

A further reason for consigning that accursed epistle to the flames (though I leave the decision to you, for it was written for your benefit rather than mine, if you have had your fill of rereading it) – in any case a reason for my disliking it – is that when I was reading it today I found a mistake in the draft of it which had been kept by me. It comes on the second page, where it says 'Id quod tu inficiando non eris,' and if it is the same in your text, I expect you have made proper game of me. What I meant was 'cui tu rei inficiandae.' Yet I do not see why that letter is any less worthy to see the light than the one written on Midwinter day, in which you published private remarks made as between you and me, which I hoped would remain secret, so much so that I did not keep a single word of the draft. I had written you another letter half in Greek which does not I think deserve to be suppressed any more than that one. If in two or three lines, or more, there are things put that you do not like, you have my permission to change them or strike them out as you think best.

897 / To Maarten Lips [Louvain, c October] 1518

Epp 987–902 are all preserved in one or both of Lips' copy books, which contain many letters from Erasmus (cf Ep 750 introduction); only Ep 897 was published by Erasmus (in the *Epistolae ad diversos* of August 1521). A probable sequence can be established, although precise dates cannot. The first letters probably date from October 1518; Ep 901 very likely dates from November or early December. The main concern is always Edward Lee (cf Ep 865 introduction). Lips evidently managed to remain friendly with both sides. He showed Lee Erasmus' answers to his critical notes on the New Testament. Lee probably felt tricked, seeing Erasmus' public rejoinder to his unpublished notes. Quite naturally he now planned a publication of his own, trying to keep his further notes concealed from Erasmus until it was ready. But thanks to Lips Erasmus

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113 Rome or Milan] Cf Epp 869:4 and 770, 831 introductions.
117 the flames] Instead Erasmus published Ep 810 in 1519, just as Budé wished him to.
122 'Id quod tu inficiando non eris'] 'as you will not deny' (Ep 810:55). Erasmus printed the amended version, which means the same; cf Ep 906:603–5.
125 Midwinter day] Ep 744, recently published in the *Auctarium*
127 half in Greek] Ep 568, published only in LB, from the Deventer Letter-book

saw some of them. For the subsequent developments cf Epp 936:34n, 960 introduction.

In the Brussels manuscript (cf Ep 750 introduction) Lips introduced this letter with a short argument, referring to Erasmus' return from Basel, to his recovery from illness (cf Ep 867), and to Johannes Hovius' (cf Ep 867:189n) visit to Lips with a copy of the *Auctarium*, evidently accompanied by this note.

TO THE WORTHY MASTER MAARTEN

Greeting. My most worthy friend, I send you a copy of my correspondence, among which there is a letter in reply to a very foolish pamphlet which you had sent me. You will find it on page 99; though afterwards I was sorry I had spent so much time on a thing of so little merit. I suppressed your name, for 5
fear of stirring up trouble for you; and his too – or else he will protest that I have made a public exhibition of him, though publicity is just what he craves. Farewell, and bear me in mind, especially in your prayers.

1518

898 / To Maarten Lips [Louvain, c October 1518]

For this letter cf Ep 897 introduction. Lips' argument in the Brussels manscript refers to the gift of a copy of Froben's enlarged *Enchiridion*. It also states that before showing Erasmus' reply (Ep 843 in the *Auctarium*) to that 'theological caviller' (Lee), 'Brother Maarten [Lips] had consulted with Erasmus. He had also put Augustine ahead of Origen and equal to Jerome [in reference to Ep 843 and especially Ep 844:132–41, 271–4, also published in the *Auctarium*]; but as usual Erasmus vehemently took the side of the Greeks.'

Greeting. You speak of stirring up the logic-chopper; steady, steady! Peace and concord must come first. My answer was not addressed to him, but to others who talk the same sort of nonsense. Read your Jerome and you will think I let him off very lightly. Augustine is one of the great doctors, but not to be compared with any of the Greeks. If you want a demonstration, read 5

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3 letter] Ep 843, which in the first edition of the *Auctarium* (cf Ep 886:57n) begins on page 99, although it does not in the reprint of March 1519. For the suppression of names see Ep 843 introduction.

6 his too] Edward Lee's

898

1 logic-chopper] Edward Lee, who is not mentioned by name in Ep 843

3 Jerome] See Epp 778:266–71, 896:70–1.

Chrysostom's commentary on John, and then Augustine's on him. Ambrose was more learned than he; so were Hilary, and even Cyprian, but they wrote less. Comparisons are odious; they were all great men, but there is an order of greatness.

I send you my *Enchiridion*; I expect you have it, but in this copy you will find some new stuff, preface etc. Farewell, and keep some affection for me, as I have much for you. I will visit you, when my health permits.

Your sincere friend Erasmus

898A / To Maarten Lips [Louvain, c November 1518?]

For this letter which is Ep 912 in Allen's edition, cf Ep 897 introduction. The date is uncertain. Allen preferred January 1519 because of the resemblance between lines 9–11 and Ep 906:494–8, but Lips himself apparently thought that this letter was prior to Ep 899, which it precedes in both his copy books. Lips' argument is very full and offers a proper identification of Lee, who had not been mentioned by name in Erasmus' earlier letters. By contrast, Lips' argument for Ep 899 is short and refers to Lee as having often been mentioned before. Finally, Erasmus' remark in Ep 899:3–4 would seem to be a suitable sequence to lines 6–7 of this letter.

Lips' argument begins with the identification of Edward Lee, as an Englishman of noble birth, from the circle or family of the bishop of Winchester (Richard Foxe; cf Ep 187). According to Lips, Lee produced – initially in a friendly spirit – many notes to the first edition of Erasmus' New Testament, which he began to communicate to the author one by one. When Erasmus brushed them aside as misleading and petty rubbish (cf Ep 750), Lee became stubborn and irritated and took to agitating against him during his absence at Basel. Lee had his notes recopied, imparting them first to Jan Briart and then also to a friend in England (cf Ep 1026). On learning this, Erasmus tried, not very successfully, to get hold of them with the aid of others as well as Lips, who kept in close contact with Lee. Lips ends his argument by adding that Lee also began to criticize Reuchlin (cf Epp 849:21–30, 856:47n).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO MAARTEN LIPS OF BRUSSELS, GREETING

You have not been very clever in your dealings with Lee, by changing the line I had laid down for you. The complaint about the friars made your case

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6 Chrysostom's commentary] Erasmus' preference is clearly reflected in many of his notes on John in the New Testament.

10 *Enchiridion*] Republished in August 1518; cf Ep 858 introduction.

more difficult; you must take care by all means to avoid any suspicion of the kind. How like himself he always is – always the censor, always the prince of critics! But it is lèse-majesté even if I had suggested that his notes are lightweight. What pompous stuff it is to say 'If I were seeking reputation, I could achieve it on the facts without help from the friars.' And then it was only last week that he started Hebrew, yet he has these extraordinary delusions of being Reuchlin or even Jerome, no less. But you, my dear Maarten, must keep on good terms with him.

I am sending you the New Testament. It is Marcus Laurinus' copy; you will not be asked by me to return it unless he demands it back, so you can keep it, and welcome. Farewell.

899 / To Maarten Lips [Louvain, c November 1518]

For this letter cf Ep 897 introduction. In his argument Lips explained that he had managed to obtain for Erasmus another of Lee's notes but since the end was missing (in the transcript) he had summarized it on a small sheet of paper (*schedula*) that was composed of formulations of his own as well as quotations from Lee's note; Erasmus had overlooked this fact and thought the criticism came from Lips. The sheet here mentioned may be the *scheda* that Erasmus had rashly destroyed (cf Ep 901:18–20). The answer to this letter is Ep 900.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO MAARTEN LIPS OF BRUSSELS, GREETING

I suppose it had to happen, that you too of all people should turn censor of my life and my researches and summon me to a solemn recantation. The time is not ripe, my dear Maarten: at your age you should be learning still, not passing judgment, especially with such authority. As though you think better of Augustine than I do, or follow him more closely than I do! That rule under which you live comes from anywhere rather than Augustine. He was never a monk, he invented no monks, he did not shut men up in pens like

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898A

6 prince of critics] Erasmus uses the name of the greatest of ancient grammarians, Aristarchus (see *Adagia* I v 57), just as for 'pompous' he writes 'Thrasonical,' thinking of the proverbial braggart in Terence's *Eunuchus*.

13 New Testament] Since Lips received a copy of the new edition (cf Ep 864 introduction) with Ep 955, the one mentioned here was probably the edition of 1516.

899

7 rule] See line 31n.

dangerous animals. If I bound myself to your rule of life, it was never from conviction, but trapped by a thousand stratagems; not that I am against the life, but it could not possibly be right for me. And yet it was never my intention to abandon it, if for no other reason, to avoid scandal, for men will never believe there is no cause for it.

If Lee does not approve my leaving that most religious way of life, I owe this to England, which compelled me to do it; this you would easily credit if you knew the whole story as it happened. I have no reason for more disliking Britain, though I have always found it a very unhealthy place. And yet I have done more good since I was alienated, as he calls it, than many who stay at home drinking or criticizing me. I have lived among men of higher character, and still do, than if I were living among your colleagues, tippling. Is it not good enough if I satisfy my conscience, the bishop, the Holy Father, and my other spiritual superiors, unless I also win approval from the censor, Lee? The wiser he thinks himself, the more fool he is. If I were to tell you the whole story, you would agree that I could not do otherwise than I did. But it's a long history. It is not for you, or for anyone, to lay down the law for another man's conscience. Lee thinks my change of status a grave sin; I think it a far more grave one to cast aspersions on another man's life, as he does with a will, when it is nothing to do with him. And yet as he does this, he sees himself in something of a halo. Take my word for it, there is not much Augustine in a man who has nothing of him except the rule (which is not his, anyway). When it says in the rule 'You shall not attempt to please by raiment but by good behaviour,' it is clear that this monstrous and most extraordinary way of life could never have had his approval. Tell me: if a man has signed away himself to Augustine, must it be wrong ever to dissent from him, even in places where he dissents from the truth? In some passages, undoubtedly, there are such lapses that no one can deny them. And yet I

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11 trapped] Cf Ep 447.

16 England] Cf Ep 296:202–11.

17 disliking] A surprising statement, especially at this time (cf Epp 886, 964 introductions), but Erasmus tended to react very emotionally to personal attacks upon his past. Allen noted several unpleasant recollections of England in Epp 105, 119, 145, 190, 282, 597.

31 rule] Large portions of a *Regula ad servos Dei* (PL 32:1377–84), traditionally included in the works of St Augustine, are also found in his letter 211, addressed to certain nuns. Modern scholarship does not follow Erasmus, who thought that only the letter was genuine; cf his edition of Augustine (Basel: Froben 1528–9) I 591–2; *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* ed M. Buchberger et al, 2nd ed (Freiburg 1957–68) sv Augustinusregel.

32 'You ... behaviour'] PL 32:1380

never fail to speak with reverence of Augustine. What people think who are both more learned and more saintly than Lee, I need not mention here. But of course it is no surprise if he has a passion for Augustine, for he supposes that he alone understands him.

Consider, pray, the arrogance with which you say 'Recant, I tell you, where you have sung out of tune; remove the errors from your book; and you will find you had much better submit to criticism than seek to dispense it.' There's folly and arrogance for you! As though I needed your assistance to correct my work! There are others whose judgment I follow, nor am I so short of judgment myself as to need correction by you. If you wish to be taken for a real Augustinian, imitate his zeal and his way of life. If Augustine were alive today, he would be much more ready to own me as his disciple than many of those who foolishly boast his name.

I write freely to you, but in a friendly spirit. Tear up this letter. If you want to keep it, make a copy of it; destroy what I have written. In future, if you write, seal your letter because of the servants. Farewell.

900 / From Maarten Lips Louvain, [c November 1518]

For this letter cf Ep 897 introduction. It answers Ep 899 and is answered by Ep 901.

MAARTEN LIPS OF BRUSSELS TO THAT EMINENT DOCTOR OF DIVINITY ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

I read your letter of reproof, my dear and most learned friend, and could hardly keep a straight face: you seemed to be living in some quite different world. When and where did I ever set up as a judge of your life and your researches? It is true, I have sometimes pointed out politely some passages where I did not think you had entirely satisfied the attentive reader. But I know that hitherto, while you have always resented severe and supercilious criticism, you have always regarded polite and friendly advice as something to be grateful for. Have you changed your mind? Not a bit of it. Then how has it come about that you write to me like this? Shall I guess what has happened to you? I wrote for you a small sheet of paper, and that on the spur of the moment, for I was busy with other things. In this I quoted some words

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38 with reverence] Cf Ep 844.
43 your book] The New Testament
53 because of the servants] Cf Epp 901:19–21, 902.

900
12 paper] Cf Ep 899 introduction.

from one of Lee's notes, indicating that the writer's name was not Lips but Lee. You therefore were either half-asleep or in a trance when you read what I wrote, for you did not distinguish between Lee and Lips, and in your letter you openly attribute to me words which are really Lee's. 'Pray consider,' you say, 'the arrogance with which you say "Recant, I tell you, where you have sung out of tune,"' and so forth. Pray reread my note, and see under whose name these words are repeated; and you will soon realize that you were under a surprising delusion as you read.

But why need I defend myself any longer when I am clearly right? Apart from that, I see at the end of your letter 'Tear up this' and what follows. I do not usually destroy letters from famous men. I much prefer to lay them up in a casket of cedar-wood.

Farewell, dear Erasmus, and pray convince yourself that the man Lips is not a hostile critic of your work, but much more a devoted reader.

From the College of Canons of St Martin's

901 / To Maarten Lips Louvain, [c November 1518]

This letter answers in part Ep 900; however lines 10–17 and 21–8 respond to further reactions to Ep 899, which Lee may have chosen not to record. Erasmus' remarks in lines 10, 21 are perhaps in response to the paper mentioned in line 19 (cf Ep 899 introduction). In his argument Lips stated that he accepted this letter as a token of true friendship and added: 'and to prevent any difficulty arising from this use of *gemitus* ['regrets' (line 21)] let me explain that I had dropped a hint to Erasmus about the taking of vows of perpetual celibacy; but I did this more to disarm his suspicions than out of deliberate policy. For I was afraid that he would think I made light of him if I had appeared quite satisfied with my vows' (see further Ep 1070). The approximate date is indicated by the publication mentioned at the end.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO MAARTEN LIPS OF BRUSSELS, GREETING

I am delighted that what otherwise astonished me was all a dream. Some of it I knew was Lee's, but you had mixed in some words of your own about his scandalous references in front of you to my change of status. And then came what I quoted in my letter, which I likewise thought was yours. Now I have no cause for astonishment, in fact I am surprised his language was not more

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17 you say] Cf Ep 899:42–3.
25 cedar-wood] Cf *Adagia* IV i 54.

arrogant. I suspected that this was precisely the reason why he would not let me see his book. Thank you for your present.

The passage you want in Augustine is in volume xi, in the *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum,* on the second leaf of the book; the chapter begins 'Apostolici qui se' etc. Read Augustine's letter to Aurelius, which is number 76. It is clear enough from that that Augustine was not a monk. In two of the sermons which he delivered to the people about his clergy (they are among the spurious sermons *Ad fratres in eremo,* numbers 52 and 53), he mentions religious profession and vows, but he refers to the vow as a resolution. Monasticism he does not mention.

Please send me again the conclusion of Lee's annotations; for after reading your paper two or three times I threw it in the fire, in case it might fall into the hands of my servant. In things like this it is not safe to trust the young. Furthermore, I do not approve your regrets; so far are they from doing good that they may double your grievances. Though I should have no misgivings in dissuading a young man of promise from putting his neck into your noose, I would not dare persuade anyone who was once in the net to break out, unless some chance of freedom should present itself, so that it might seem heaven's doing. So many are the traps and barricades with which those Pharisees of yours have fenced in their despotic rule. In the mean time, seek relief in reading holy books. I send you two small things, one my system of theological study, and the other my arguments to the Epistles of the apostles. Farewell, dearest Maarten. From the College of the Lily.

902 / From Johannes Hovius to Maarten Lips Louvain, [1518?]

Cf Ep 897 introduction. Allen added this letter to the preceding exchanges between Lips and Erasmus at about this time because it affords a valuable

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9 present] For an earlier gift see Ep 807 introduction.

10 *De haeresibus*] Chapter 40, stating that it is heresy to reject categorically marriage and individual property (CC 46:307). Erasmus' reference is to Augustine's works (Basel: Amerbach, Petri, and Froben 1506).

12 number 76] Now Ep 60

14 sermons] Nos 555–6 in PL 39:1568–81. Erasmus recognized that they were authentic but inexplicably placed among spurious pieces; see his edition of 1528–9, X 994 and *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* ed A. Vacant et al (Paris repr 1923–67) I-2 2310.

18 conclusion] Cf Epp 765, 898A, 899 introductions.

20 servant] Cf Ep 902.

21 regrets] See introduction and Ep 1070.

28 system ... arguments] See Ep 894 introduction.

insight into Erasmus' relations with his amanuenses. In addition it may perhaps reveal the specific cause of Erasmus' suspicions in Epp 899:51–3, 901:18–21. Lips probably wished to check a paper which he had sent to Erasmus, perhaps without keeping a proper record. So he tried to borrow it from Erasmus' files, addressing himself to the secretary because he did not dare to bother the master himself. For Hovius see Ep 867:189n; for Erasmus' subsequent recollections of him cf Allen Ep 1437:192–5.

Greetings. I send you the small book of Greek prayers not bound yet, as you wished. Thank you for the present you sent me, though there would have been no need of it; you know I am devoted to you. As to the note that you sent me back, let me tell you what happened. Your brother comes to our house, knocks at the door; I appear promptly and ask him what he wants, and he gives me what you sent. My master, as luck would have it, while I was opening the door, caught sight of this brother of yours, and asked me whether I had taken in a letter for him. I replied that I had not received anything like that. He asks me again what my business is with your brother. After some hesitation I gave him the worst possible answer, poor fool, that I had had back a note which I had sent for you to see. He flared up at once and would have almost extinguished poor me with his thunderbolts, I mean that irony of his, had I not known my man. It was not that he did not want it shown to you, but he was sure I had done the same with other things. Had I not been a perfect dolt, something else would have come into my head, either about the Greek prayer-book, or I might have thrown in something else that was gospel truth. So I beg you, dear Master Maarten, keep it to yourself; it is a thing of no importance, but because this is what my master wants, I thought it not unreasonable to fall in with his wishes. Make sure however that no one discovers that I have written you this, and when you have read it, please consign it to the flames. If my master ever comes to see you, mind you say nothing about it. Farewell. From the College of the Lily.

Johannes Hovius, Erasmus' servant

902A / To Bruno Amerbach — Louvain, 4 November [1518?]

This letter, which is Ep 705 in Allen's edition, is known only from a nineteenth-century manuscript copy: Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University

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902

17 gospel truth] To speak 'from the tripod' like the priestess of the Delphic oracle is to speak the solemn truth (cf *Adagia* I vii 90).

of Basel, MS G II 13a f 54. The date must fall in between Erasmus' arrival at Louvain and Bruno's death, therefore in 1517 or 1518. With some hesitation Allen chose 1517; Alfred Hartmann (AK II Ep 637) preferred 1518, and the connection with other letters of recent date bears this out; see lines 5n and especially 7n.

ERASMUS TO HIS DEAR BRUNO, GREETING

I recall that some time ago a mistake of some sort was made in the critical notes on the letters which I rejected as ignorant. Please either send my original to me here or tell me where the mistake lies, so that it can be put right in the next edition. I am grateful to you for your help in seeing my things through; you are what you always were. For Froben by some unhappy fate always likes donkeys. Best wishes; also to your excellent brothers Basilius and Bonifacius.

There is an old Greek proverb, 'Nothing worse than three C's.' Now we can adapt it to you: Nothing better than three B's, Bruno, Basilius, Bonifacius. Give my greetings to Doctor Zasius.

Louvain, 4 November

To that excellent scholar Bruno Amerbach of Basel, gifted in the three tongues. In Basel

903 / To Henricus Glareanus Louvain, [December?] 1518

From the first sentence it appears likely that Glareanus had sent a letter to Basel in the autumn (after the one mentioned in Ep 869:26), believing Erasmus still to be there. This is the answer, which may perhaps have been sent to Paris together with Ep 906. It was published in the *Epistolae ad diversos*.

ERASMUS TO HENRICUS GLAREANUS, GREETING

Your letter was brought here from Basel and delivered to me by Hieronymus

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902A

2 mistake] The reference apparently is to the critical essays *(censurae)* inserted in Erasmus' edition of Jerome's letters *(Hieronymi opera*, Basel 1516, III; cf Ep 396:315–20) to question the authenticity of a specific text; cf Allen Ep 1000:27–31.

5 help] With the proofs of the New Testament. Erasmus had made a plea to the Amerbach brothers for help; cf Epp 886:27–8, 904:42n.

7 donkeys] Cf Ep 885 introduction and line 33.

9 proverb] Cf *Adagia* III vi 82, referring to the Cappadocians, the Cretans, and the Cilicians.

Froben. My affection for you remains quite unimpaired, although my bodily vigour loses something every day, partly from age and partly from the constantly increasing burden of my work; most of all from the weariness engendered by those noisy ruffians and their conspiracy against humane studies and genuine piety. On the society of Johannes Lascaris I warmly congratulate you; he is always the same, always frank and open in his encouragement of young men of promise. God grant him a very long life, for the advancement of the humanities. Do not fail, my dear Glareanus, to equip yourself in every way you can, that when I have to hand the torch on to you, you may take my place and throw the name of Erasmus in the shade. Farewell. Give my greetings to Cyprianus Taleus, to Nicolas Bérault, to Herman of Friesland, and all my other well-wishers in your part of the world.

Louvain, 1518

904 / From Lambertus Hollonius Basel, 5 December 1518

The autograph manuscript of this letter is in the University Library, Wrocław, MS Rehdiger 254 f 99 (Ep 92).

Lambert de Hollogne or Hollonius, a young scholar from Liège, was sent to Basel by Erasmus together with Menard of Hoorn (cf Ep 885:2n). According to Johann Froben (cf AK II Ep 642) he was an MA and a jurist. Froben was satisfied

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903

3 Froben] Hieronymus Froben (1501–63), the eldest son of Johann Froben and subsequently his successor in the Basel press. In 1515 he registered in the University of Basel. His visit to Louvain at this time may have lasted for six months, or he may have repeated his trip in 1519. In early July 1519 he returned from Louvain to Basel with a letter from Johannes Hovius to Beatus Rhenanus (cf BRE Ep 416). In it Hovius politely declined a suggestion that he go to Basel and work for the Froben press, pointing out that Erasmus could not do without him since Hieronymus Froben was unable to take his place in Louvain; cf AK II Ep 631.

7 Lascaris] See Epp 865:61, 905:25–7.

11 hand the torch on] Cf *Adagia* I ii 38.

12 name of Erasmus] Cf Epp 905:24, 906:52–4.

13 Taleus] Taleus lectured on Pliny; cf Ep 768:5n.

13 Bérault] See Ep 925.

14 Herman] Haio Herman of Friesland, of Emden (d 1539/40), was the son of Haio Ubbena and Eiske Hompen and a kinsman of the famous Rodolphus Agricola. At this time he was a student in Paris. In the summer of 1519 he came to stay at the College of the Lily in Louvain and thereafter remained in contact with Erasmus. He continued his studies in Paris and Italy and in 1532 became a member of the Council of Utrecht; see de Vocht CTL I 393–4, II 13–15; Luther w *Briefwechsel* II Ep 265.

with his work, but Zasius and Beatus Rhenanus were not (cf Ep 862 introduction), although the latter had called him a learned young man (cf BRE Ep 80) and collaborated with him on the ill-advised first edition of Erasmus' *Colloquia* (cf Ep 909 introduction). Hollonius later went to Italy and died in Rome before 25 May 1522; cf Ep 1284. See de Vocht CTL II 24.

TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, PRINCE OF SCHOLARS, FROM LAMBERTUS HOLLONIUS, GREETING

On 30 November I wrote you a letter, honoured sir, by a carrier I know from Liège, and so it would be needless to repeat what I said, to avoid a second helping of cabbage. But not being sure whether you have had that letter or no, I thought it best to retell the whole story briefly. And so let me tell you that I have not found the canon of Aachen with whom you had left your sword, because he was said to have gone to Rome, and his servant was not there. All the same, while I was there Dr Leonardus, one of the canons, said he would see that you got it back. At Bedburg, as the count was away, I gave the letter to his steward. Other news you will be able to learn from my letter to Baerland.

I have taken a post with Froben the printer, who at the instance (as the common phrase is) of Rhenanus was glad to take me on. Your man Jacobus is in charge of the revised Testament; it has got as far as the Pauline Epistles, which are printing now. More's *Utopia* approaches the end. It will be followed by a work by Zasius, of which I think Bonifacius Amerbach gave you a taste when you were about to leave here. The plague is rife here; it has carried off my friend and indeed colleague Menard, on which I have written at length to my friend Rutgerus. Froben is sending you a book by Luther, a truly Christian theologian, but unpopular with our strict, not to

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904

5 cabbage] Cf *Adagia* I v 38.

7 canon of Aachen] Perhaps Johann Sudermann or Johann Schoenraid; cf Ep 867 introduction and lines 117n, 118n.

9 Leonardus] Priccardus; cf Ep 972 introduction.

10 Bedburg] Hermann von Neuenahr's castle; cf Ep 867:80n.

12 Baerland] See Ep 852:82n.

14 Jacobus] Nepos; cf Ep 864 introduction.

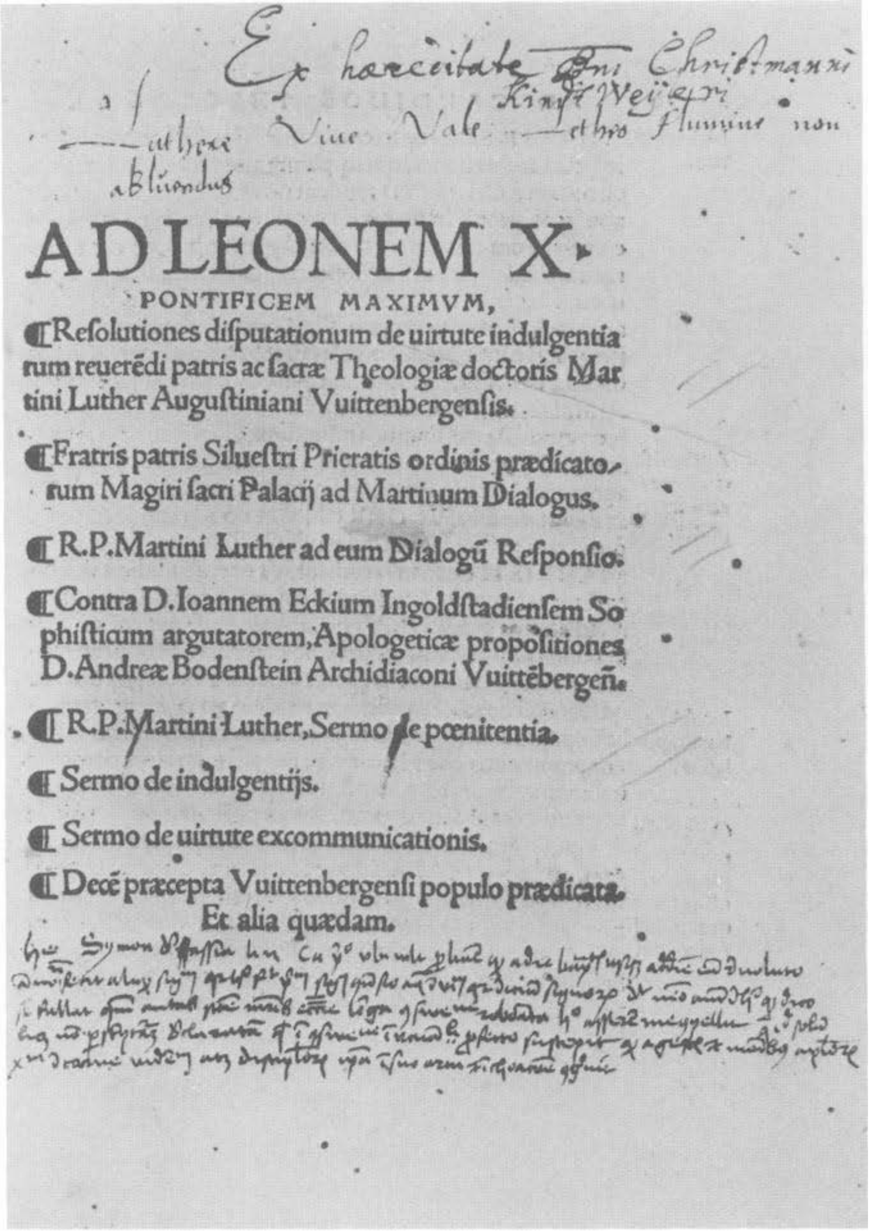
16 *Utopia*] Froben's second edition, with the date of November 1518 in the colophon; cf AK II Ep 642.

17 work by Zasius] See Ep 862 introduction.

18 plague] Cf Ep 861:7n.

20 Rutgerus] Rescius, recently appointed professor of Greek at the Collegium Trilingue in Louvain; cf Epp 546, 691:19n.

20 by Luther] At least two had been printed by Froben by this date. The one he



Ex hæreditate Dni Christmanni Kinge Weigeri

Luthere Vive Vale Lethæo fluminis non abluendus

AD LEONEM X.

PONTIFICEM MAXIMVM,

❡Reſolutiones diſputationum de uirtute indulgentiarum reuerẽdi patris ac ſacræ Theologiæ doctoris Martini Luther Auguſtiniani Vuittenbergenſis.

❡Fratris patris Silueſtri Prieratis ordinis prædicatorum Magiri ſacri Palacij ad Martinum Dialogus.

❡R.P.Martini Luther ad eum Dialogũ Reſponſio.

❡Contra D.Ioannem Eckium Ingoldſtadienſem Sophiſticum argutatorem, Apologeticæ propoſitiones D.Andreæ Bodenſtein Archidiaconi Vuittẽbergẽ.

❡R.P.Martini Luther, Sermo de pœnitentia.

❡Sermo de indulgentijs.

❡Sermo de uirtute excommunicationis.

❡Decẽ præcepta Vuittenbergenſi populo prædicata.
Et alia quædam.

Hic Symon [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Martin Luther *Ad Leonem X* title page
Basel: Froben October 1518
By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University

say superstitious, characters who dress up as theologians. I cannot tell you how well it has been received by those who are keen on the subject; I at least, who am a mere nobody, have felt my mind set free from its former enslavement to all the most frigid details of ceremonial. How blessed we are to live in an age like this, in which with you to guide and lead us and bring us to perfection both literature and true Christianity are being born again!

The archbishop of Mainz, after two months as a cardinal, has died. What a prey for the Lion!

Well, there is a short, unscholarly, and barely coherent letter for you! You must take it in good part and forgive me if my nonsense offends you. With many, many assurances of my devotion, farewell, O foster-father of good literature.

Basel, 5 December 1518

Greetings from Beatus and Basilius too, and Froben and his wife; all send their best wishes. Johannes Oecolampadius took his degree in theology last week and departed soon after for Augsburg, where he has a post as public preacher. Farewell once more.

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enclosed here was most likely the first – the earliest collection of Luther's Latin writings, *Ad Leonem X … resolutiones disputationum de virtute indulgentiarum …* (October 1518). By February 1519 Froben had sent six hundred copies to France and Spain alone and other consignments to the Netherlands and England (cf Luther w *Briefwechsel* I Ep 146). Froben only obtained the copy for this collection at the Frankfurt autumn fair of 1518, so Erasmus had left Basel when the edition was undertaken. Froben clearly had no misgivings about sending Luther's book to Erasmus as a gift, and Hollonius had none about expressing his own enthusiasm for it, so evidently Erasmus was not expected to react adversely to it; in fact he may well have expressed himself in Basel much the same way as he did in Ep 872 (cf Ep 967:107n). However, Erasmus' reaction was unequivocal. In letters to correspondents opposed to Luther he claimed that he had not even read the book (cf Epp 961:36–9, 967:110–14), and soon, probably in February or March, when he was under attack in Louvain and accused of connivance with Luther (cf Ep 930:12n), he threatened to end his own co-operation with the Froben press if it continued to publish Luther's writings (cf Epp 938, Allen Epp 1143:20–2, 1526:34–7). The threat worked. It seems that after this only one minor Luther edition was undertaken by the press, allegedly when Froben himself was away to attend the Frankfurt autumn fair of 1519. Froben's collective volume, however, was eagerly picked up by Matthias Schürer in Strasbourg, who published reprints in February and August 1519; see Benzing *Lutherbibliographie* nos 3–5; Volz *Die ersten Sammelausgaben*.

28 has died] A false rumour; for the following allusion to Leo x ('the Lion') cf Ep 891:27n.

35 his wife] Cf Ep 885 introduction.

36 Oecolampadius] He became a DD on 28 November 1518.

When I was about to seal my letter, your Jacobus asked me to add at the same time something he would have written himself if he had had time, that the lives of the Evangelists have been printed in the Testament but only in Greek. Also that Bruno alone is helping him with the proof-correction, and Basilius is doing none of it; and so he is surprised that you have not written to them. Farewell once more.

From your same devoted Lambertus Hollonius of Liège, with his own hand

To the glory of letters and of all literary men, Erasmus of Rotterdam, his most beloved teacher. In Louvain

905 / To Paolo Bombace Louvain, 13 December 1518

This letter answers the points raised in Bombace's Ep 865. It was published in the *Farrago.*

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND PAOLO BOMBACE, GREETING

Truly the Muses and the Graces presided at your cradle! You overwhelm me with so much kindness that I am ashamed of offering you gratitude so often that never gets beyond words, and indeed I cannot always think of fresh ways to express it. His eminence the cardinal of the Santi Quattro Coronati has put me the more in his debt, inasmuch as I had no claims whatever on him. Monsignor Marino Caracciolo, the papal nuncio to the emperor, took great trouble over the business, besides writing me a most kind letter. As to that first copy, I wonder who intercepted it; for I do not see that a letter of this kind can be any use to anyone except the person to whom it is addressed; it would be different if some wealthy bishopric or a splendid benefice were concerned. It grieves me to think of all the extra trouble I have caused you when you were already so busy; but I appreciate these opportunities of seeing your nobility of character more clearly day by day. I only wish this country of ours had even a few people like you. Who ever

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41 lives] The new edition had both the Latin lives by Jerome and the Greek by Sophronius.

42 Bruno] Cf Ep 902A. His brother, Basilius Amerbach, apparently left Basel for some time because of the plague. Thus he was likewise unable to help with Zasius' book (above line 17; AK II Ep 638). In a final letter at the end of the New Testament dated 5 February 1519, Johann Froben acknowledged the assistance of the brothers but made clear that the bulk of the correction was done by Nepos.

905

5 cardinal] Lorenzo Pucci

displayed more sincere or constant affection for his most distinguished friend than you have done without recompense for a man of lowly station like myself, from whom you could hope for no service in return, and all this when you have so much greater learning and greater fortune than my own?

I cannot guess who the Frenchman was who, you say, disappeared, unless perhaps it is Christophe de Longueil, a young man with a natural gift, to judge from what he has published, for all liberal disciplines and especially for writing. He is one of those, if I mistake not, who will one day put the name of Erasmus in the shade. But this gives me nothing but pleasure, if the loss of my reputation is a gain to the republic of letters. I cannot think what could drag Johannes Lascaris away from Rome, particularly with Pope Leo at the head of affairs and of the revival of learning. Please greet the Boerio brothers most warmly on my behalf.

Your letter did not find me in Basel, nor was Monsignor Antonio Pucci, the papal nuncio, there at that moment. I had however written to him on this subject while he was at Zürich; for to pay him a visit, which he greatly desired and I had almost promised, was ruled out by my state of health, which could not yet allow me to mount a horse, and by my literary labours. Travelling by water, though it had its drawbacks, gradually allowed me to recover strength. With the honourable Count Hermann of Neuenahr I spent about five days in great comfort and enjoyed myself so much that I thought I was almost a new man. But I was soon precipitated into imminent danger, so that I had to be carried to Louvain more dead than alive, whether I owe this trouble to the violent and pestilential winds that were then blowing or to my own folly in risking a journey through the middle of Cologne, when the city was full of death everywhere. Two surgeons successively confirmed that it was the plague; that three scabs came away I cannot deny. I was in no mood to be ill, and I did not think it was the plague, and this belief did me good. But by the mercy of heaven I am now getting better – a great disappointment in the mean time to those who hate to see the resurgence of a better sort of studies. Farewell.

Louvain, 13 December 1518

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21 Longueil] Cf Epp 865:31n, 914 introduction. For Erasmus' acquaintance with an early piece of work by him cf Ep 935:6, but in the absence of any personal contacts prior to March 1519 (cf Ep 914:100–2), Erasmus' praise here may seem exaggerated and out of context; perhaps it is the result of amplification at the time of printing.

30 written to him] Ep 860

32 health] Cf Ep 847:7n.

34 water] See Ep 867 with the details of Erasmus' journey to Louvain and his sickness.

906 / To Guillaume Budé Louvain, 22 December 1518

This letter offers a second and fuller answer to Ep 810 and also answers Ep 896. Budé in turn answered with Ep 915. All were published in the *Farrago*. For the uneasy relationship reflected in this profuse letter cf the preface to this volume.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, PERPETUAL FRIEND OF GUILLAUME BUDÉ WHETHER HE WILL OR NO, WISHETH HIM ALL PROSPERITY, NOT FOR THE LAST TIME, AND MAY IT LAST FOR EVER AND EVER

On top of that scolding epistle that reached me in Basel here comes a fresh one like some official missive carried by an envoy extraordinary, formally and openly denouncing our ancient treaty of friendship and declaring war to the death for the future. Let me start, my dear Budé, by wishing you joy of that state of blessedness which leaves you with time and spirits for these pleasantries; for this is proof enough that a friend whose prosperity I have much at heart is not only flourishing but gay and happy. Consequently, though I myself this whole year and a half have been immersed in researches of such a kind that neither body nor spirit is equal to the burden (especially since my tedious load was made heavier by the knowledge that I was labouring mainly for an ungrateful public and prejudiced critics); though my evil genius has tormented me with so many cruel attacks of illness and other cares and disappointments which I need not now go into (for, though you congratulate me on returning to Louvain safe and sound, I was in fact deposited there more dead than alive) – in spite of all this, I say, even in the midst of a storm of troubles your lively letter cheered me or at least made me feel better, although to return your pleasantries and give you some sort of tit for tat, which I would greatly have enjoyed, I certainly had neither liberty nor leisure. Not but what even now I am not sufficiently recovered to satisfy myself or my friends, such was the severity of my illness; unless you prefer to ascribe the trouble to excessive overwork. So after all I will send a single answer to both your letters –treatises rather – but before doing so I must get one solemn undertaking out of you on oath: you must believe me when I say I

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4 epistle] Ep 810

5 official missive] Erasmus is referring to the *fetiales*, the three envoys, accompanied by another delegate, the *pater patratus*, who were sent out by ancient Rome to demand satisfaction and declare war if they did not get it. Cf the salutation of Ep 896.

11 year and a half] That is, since he settled in Louvain; cf Ep 864 introduction.

17 congratulate me] Ep 896:111–12; for Erasmus' sickness on arrival see Ep 867.

am absolutely convinced that whatever you write, be it grave or gay, is the fruit of friendship deep and sincere, and you must believe the same of me and credit me when I swear by the god of friendship if you will not accept my unsupported word.

Your complete sincerity was the first thing I emphasized to Beatus Rhenanus. I make the same point quite clear in my last letter, which in your usual playful way you call indignant. There is no one whose letters I enjoy as much as yours, and I get profit of all sorts out of them as well as enjoyment. To begin with, whether you are disputing with me or joking or attacking me, I end up having learnt something, for nothing comes from you in your most careless moments that others can equal when they write with the greatest care. And then your copious flow of language rouses me in my lethargy, your warmth puts an edge on me when I am cold, your ever-flowing abundance criticizes and corrects my thin, dry style. Finally, since the chief pleasure in life, in my opinion, is to pass one's idle hours in the company of loyal friends, what more delightful thing could come one's way than to converse by exchange of letters with such a special friend? Indeed, when I read your letters, written with such a high degree of literary skill, I seem somehow to have a more lively impression than if I were listening to you face to face, for all that you are such an entertaining companion in the flesh.

This pleasure I renew from time to time by rereading your letters after an interval; and again when I show them to friends my enjoyment is as fresh as if they had only just reached me for the first time. Even supposing that the gain in reputation I thus acquire were not brought to account in the mean while, a man with his eye on posterity will find it in my view far from negligible. Let my own works die with their author or (more likely) before he does; yet our descendants will speak of a certain Erasmus as one whom the great Budé did not dislike or think wholly of no account. This is an ambition (to speak frankly) of which I am not ashamed, nor would I unsay it. And so when I saw that long elaborate letter of yours all ready to be published, I was afraid of losing some of this reputation, afraid that posterity might judge that between Budé and Erasmus there was not the same affectionate relationship that I had hoped might appear, and that I believe there is. I had reason to fear

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31 Beatus] Cf Ep 869:9–14.
33 indignant] Ep 896:5
45 face to face] Budé and Erasmus may have met in Paris, but nowhere else, it seems, is there any evidence of personal contact.
52 die] Cf Ep 903:11–12.
56 letter] Ep 810; down to line 69 below Erasmus is responding to Budé's postscript to Ep 896.

the same loss of face among friends of mine who do not know and understand your nature intimately at first hand. This seemed to affect you almost more than me, for I should be more or less protected, I thought, from any such suspicion by my writings, if any should chance to survive. But there remained a risk that someone might form a wrong idea of Budé's heart, though nothing can be more sincere. So I foresaw two possible results: if I showed my friends the letter, some loss of reputation was inevitable, and if I did not show it, I must be deprived of part of my enjoyment. This fear at the time possessed my mind; but I will dismiss it gladly, such as it is, on your advice, if you seriously tell me to do so.

The point here is not how skilled I am at taking humour and pleasantry, but what men are likely to think of us who form their opinion on our published books alone. I know there is a kind of Gallic wit which is quite unbridled, which lets itself go almost too freely and by severe and sober critics might be thought very close to insolence. I thought I had noticed at close quarters that you by nature very much delight in this kind of pleasantry, especially at the expense of people you particularly like, so that you can enjoy yourself at will, almost as the great ones of the earth habitually keep some humble friend as a favourite at the lower table, not far above their own household, at whose expense they can say and do what they like for their own amusement. Nor should I grudge you this entertainment, if what passed had no spectators except such as know us both well and are likely to put as favourable an interpretation on our humour as I do myself. As it is, you can see how even the most straightforward remarks are twisted by most people into accusations; and in these days every place is full of people like that, on the lookout for mischief. What do you suppose they will say when they read joking remarks of yours which look exactly like serious abuse – remarks which scarcely any besides myself can appreciate or interpret as not serious?

Next, I admit readily enough that I rank below you no less in literary gifts than in worldly position, and (this I know you will not deny) it was your scholarship and not your money-bags, it was the Muse and not our lady of Rhamnus that brought us together or, rather, bound me so closely to you. I wish you well of your prosperity, but it is your intelligence I love and admire. I have no doubt whatever that you hold your worldly fortunes for the benefit of all your friends and not for yourself alone; but it is out of what you write

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72 Gallic wit] Cf Epp 636:15–16, 961:42–8, 967:175–6, suggesting French origins for the *Julius exclusus*.

92 Rhamnus] A shrine of Nemesis, whom Erasmus does not distinguish from Fortune; cf *Adagia* II vi 38.

that I so much enjoy enriching myself, and this source is no whit diminished by your generosity towards everyone. Against your purse I have never yet harboured any designs, nor taken anything from it. Nor should a man be considered as in modest circumstances if he is contented with his lot. I rather think that between scholars some other subject for pleasantry would be appropriate, especially if they are close friends. Cicero jokes at the expense of his friend Trebatius, Ausonius plays with his Symmachus, Pliny enjoys a pleasantry with two or three of his acquaintance. This kind of humour I doubt if you will find anywhere in the works of the learned. These lighter passages are commonly added here and there, as though to season serious discourse. But what sort of a style are we to call it when the whole discourse from head to foot, as they say, contains nothing but flouts and japes and innuendoes?

Be that as it may, the exchange of pleasantries between friends should certainly be mutual. Otherwise the effect will be, not of friends exchanging jokes with one another, but of some great man letting fly at a professional butt whom he has hired with a place at his table. As it is, if I say anything at all unguarded or outspoken, you treat it as monstrous abuse; if I soften down something which might have seemed too outspoken so as not to give offence, I am a flatterer and a toady; if I happen to say anything in jest, you take me up as though it contained some hidden meaning. These are the most unfair conditions within which I am confined: if I answer your jokes seriously, I am thought to infringe the dignity of a powerful friend; if I repay one joke with another, I am accused of a concealed attack; if I answer you mildly, I am said to be humble and grovelling; and if I say nothing, this is fear of a man more influential than myself. Tell me, my dear Budé, in the name of all the Muses, what was there even in that earlier letter, the publication of which you regret, that let fly at you so wantonly, indeed that was not friendly and respectful? I had heard that some people were indignant merely with the fact that I had dared to answer Lefèvre; others, that I had answered him with some freedom. I wished to placate this latter class, once you had given me an opening by your letter of protest. So I put forward my dilemma, and this is

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100 subject for pleasantry] Erasmus prefers to assume that Budé was joking when he relayed the royal offer; see Epp 810:453–4, 896:91–4.

102 Trebatius] In the seventh book of his *Epistolae ad familiares*

102 Ausonius] A professor in Bordeaux in the fourth century AD; he and Pliny the Younger were obvious names to choose as having left behind some correspondence with their friends.

123 regret] Ep 778; cf Ep 896:43–5.

127 letter of protest] Ep 744

my argument: if you give me advice you are too late, and if you are rebuking me you do it without cause.

But I having rashly added to the first part a mention of Epimetheus, because on that subject you had issued a belated warning, what a turmoil you proceed to raise! 'Now, dear brother Prometheus,' you say, 'have you forgotten saying in your letter?' as though you were fastening some monstrous charge upon me, so that I cannot deny it. And a little later 'Pray, dear Erasmus,' you say, 'bite your lip and let me borrow your patience for a little while, while I upbraid you in my turn.' And then again 'For from time to time you slap me or box my ears.' Will not anyone who believes this take me for an abusive fellow, as much of a stranger as can be to the Graces – though with my temperament I would rather not hurt a friend even in fun? I think it happens to you sometimes that you have some good remarks stored up and are afraid of their being lost, so you use them for no better reason than to avoid wasting them. These are pretty remarks all right, I agree, if they were uttered in the right place. And in order to find a place for them, you put words into my mouth which are quite alien to my own character and feelings. 'So what is the object of speaking out now? Unless you wish to give the impression of giving a black mark, or a black-and-white one, to my *Apologia;* for you nearly always under-value my work on some preconceived principles, misusing (some people think) your confidence in our long-standing friendship.' This is the remark you attribute to me, then turn round and contradict it, changing character all of a sudden, defendant one minute and prosecutor the next. Your victory is assured if the judges give you so much freedom that, when it suits you, you can answer for me as well as for yourself. And yet you were answering my letter, in which nothing of the sort is to be found. But at this point it will appear, I know, that you were simply joking. All the same, were you joking then too, when you said 'I simply must reply to your letter, which was elegantly written and successful in point of style, but in fairness and sympathy left something to be desired'? Pray consider whether that looks like another of your jests: 'At that point you should give advance warning that you are planning a defence, and I perhaps

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130 Epimetheus] Cf Ep 778:116n.

132 you say] Ep 810:37–57

139 hurt a friend] Cf Ep 39:84–5.

145 'So what is the object] In the original of this letter, as it was sent to Budé, Erasmus must have written 'you say' *(inquis)* after 'object,' whereas Budé's text (Ep 810:47–51), which he was quoting, had the hypothetical 'you will say' *(inquies).* In Ep 915:149–56 Budé protested against this change, and when publishing this letter Erasmus omitted the word altogether.

155 'I simply must] Ep 810:52–4, and the following citation, lines 42–6

should have performed my function. It was you made me an Epimetheus; for all you cared, I was not to discover that the play was to be produced until you had already sent someone on the stage to speak the prologue.'

Those were your words, all very elegant and scholarly, no doubt. I might perhaps have done what you tell me to do, had I then had my Budé at my elbow. The wounds which Lefèvre had dealt me I did not feel for some time, and in Louvain there was no one at that moment (for I was a new arrival) on whose advice I could set much store or trust it. You perhaps would have told me to reply in a more temperate spirit and with more restraint, and that is what I was the first to tell myself at the time. I am not so undisciplined by nature as you make me out to be, nor was I at that time so deeply moved as you imagine. It was in sorrow that I wrote that *Apologia*, not in anger or resentment. You are welcome to disbelieve me, if any mortal ever heard me, when the pain of that wound was still fresh, using angry words about Lefèvre, even over the wine. I therefore thought at the time that I was in my sound senses; and some people I could name thought so too, who are Lefèvre's keenest supporters and proud of being his pupils. Their opinion seems to me, on this point at any rate, to carry ever so slightly more weight than yours and your friends', whose judgment I value most highly in other respects. I might take the point that the French naturally support a Frenchman and exercise my right to reject jurors for partiality. You were, as I said, a long way away, and the case called for immediate action. I might, I suppose, have consulted you; you would have summoned a committee of your friends; and a year later the pronouncement of the oracle might have reached me. But why was I expected to consult you rather than all my other friends? Were you the only one who descried the proper course? Have the rest no eyes? Assuming that you do not let me be judge in my own case.

Now, suppose I had consulted several friends: it may be they would all have advised me to moderate my *Apologia*. I should have undertaken to do so. At this point again, what might have seemed very mild to me might have appeared to one or other of them not nearly mild enough; or was it your idea that my *Apologia* should be reproduced in several copies by the scriveners and circulated to Germany, Spain, England, and France before being set up in type? If only we could do that with all the books we publish! Yet even if one takes no count of expense, it is difficult, for one thing, to have many ideas on someone else's work; and for another, I can scarcely find a single friend with the leisure to attend to what other people have written, for it needs a good deal of attention. It is easier to find people to read a published work in order to pick it to pieces than those who will go through something

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165 for some time] Cf Ep 597:37n.

before publication and correct it. In the end, since my friends' opinions would have varied here too, surely the question, what do we mean by 'mild,' would come back to me for decision? Granted that a man could be found with time to spare, where is there a flute-player so reliable that he could stand by me, and I sing soft or loud to match his accompaniment? This whole business of writing and printing was polished off within about a fortnight. There were many witnesses, so do not suspect me of embroidery. And do not think I have devoted so much time or energy to this controversy that I needed advice from you to recall me to sacred study and restore me to my true self from some sort of exile: consider what I have written in the mean time, and you will see that your advice was not required.

But suppose that I lost my temper and did pay too little attention to the way I ought to behave: does this mean that I made an Epimetheus of you? If a man had fallen into a well and your advice was 'You ought to have gone the other way; you would not have fallen in if you had listened to good advice,' would not the man be justified in replying 'I wish you had warned me in time; what I need now is not advice but help'? Though your answer to this latter point is to say you were thinking of my future. Can you find anything to that effect in your letter? Had you said 'You made an intemperate answer to Lefèvre; in future kindly do not be so stupid,' it was possible to understand what you meant. As it is, I am Erasmus and no Oedipus. For I could not even guess that you would put this interpretation on what you call your advice. If you fill such a long letter with criticism of a friend, who has made a mistake if you like, and all the time do nothing for him, what has become of my fairminded old friend Budé? All you do is to distort and exaggerate a friend's mistake and reopen a wound that was already beginning to heal over. There remained one way of being really helpful, if you had made up the quarrel between him and me. This kind office you obstinately refused to perform, though Ruzé was insisting on it, and yet in the beginning of your letter you call yourself a peacemaker, against whom 'I have taken offence passionately, and have suddenly turned my horns.' If you are jesting in both places, I think your jests ought at least to be consistent. Which was it you were afraid of, that I should attack Lefèvre again after being so reluctant to defend myself against him (a thing that you too seem to understand) or that he would make a fresh attack on me? When I

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204 fortnight] Cf Ep 597:37n.
207 advice from you] Cf Ep 810:332–4.
216 my future] Cf Ep 810:221–34, referring to Ep 744.
219 Oedipus] Cf *Adagia* I iii 36.
227 Ruzé] See Ep 869:17n.
228 peacemaker] Ep 810:16, 21

assure you that I have no fear of this, you declare there is absolutely no danger and make fun of the suspicions of my friends; although none of my friends in fact suspected it – it was a rumour set on foot by certain people who side with Lefèvre, or at least wish me no good. For I myself have always thought too well of Lefèvre and also of his learned friends and disciples to be afraid of anything of the sort from them. I was more afraid of ignorant and noisy wretches, with whom it is discreditable even to engage in controversy.

Meanwhile you open up again this question of my 'trivialities.' On this subject I have never felt any resentment and never expressed any, and yet you describe me as returning to the subject because I cannot 'control my indignation'; and this you infer pretty brazenly from the passage where I assure you that I was not moved in the very least, so much so that when certain German friends gave this a very impatient reception, I made fun of them instead of trying to pacify them. What then is the point of those fierce and formidable words: 'Is this necessary? If I say something to you as an old acquaintance, relying on the privilege of friendship, must you unsheath the flashing blade of your eloquence against me? In order to oblige your rather passionate spirit, must you have the law on me until it is satisfied?' and much that follows to the same effect? If you are serious when you write this, where in anything of mine do you find this uncontrolled bad temper? Where is this wrangling? Where do I rely on my patroness Minerva and supported by the resources of eloquence fight against justice? If you are jesting, by what signs can a reader who knows neither of us detect that it is only a jest, when you give such a lifelike performance as an angry man that anyone genuinely indignant could not express himself better than your counterfeit of him? If you wish to engage your friend in that Spartan game that normally ends in weals and bruises, to teach me endurance I suppose, mind you do not provoke the criticism that it is not exactly well timed to do this to a man rather older than you are, while Lycurgus' matches with their bloody outcome were exercise only for young men. There is now a danger that it will occur to someone to say something about you like Plato's famous retort to Diogenes. Diogenes had trodden on Plato's luxurious cushions and said he was treading on Plato's vainglory. 'So you do,' said Plato, 'but with vainglory of

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235 suspicions] Epp 810:186–8; cf 721 introduction.
241 'trivialities'] Cf Ep 810:62–3.
244 the passage] Ep 778:218–20
248 'Is this necessary?] Ep 810:68–72
259 Spartan game] Perhaps a reminiscence of Plutarch *Lycurgus* 16.9
261 rather older] Budé was born in 1468 and was thus hardly younger than Erasmus.
264 Plato's … retort] Diogenes Laertius 6.26

another sort.' It is to be feared therefore that someone, when he sees the indignant letters in which you castigate my indignation, may say to you likewise 'You scold him for being indignant, but yours is indignation of another sort.' In any case you act the indignant man; you are not angry. Granted that it is an act, it is certainly a very clever one, like that of the actor in Lucian playing Ajax who broke two or three people's heads in the process and frightened plenty more. But he was wearing an actor's mask; you are not in character, and you are dealing with a friend. Surely, if anyone could see your face as you speak or write like this, he might understand that your savage words are merely a jest. But as it is, a reader cannot see a writer's face; he must judge what he means from what he writes.

More of this elsewhere; now I will take your letter in order. You say that if I had still been free to choose, you would have advised me to overlook what Lefèvre has written against me, though in the same letter you admit that, if the case were being heard in your court, you would not deprive me of the right to defend myself but would limit the time allowed me. How this plan would work out, I make for the moment no estimate. Of one thing I am absolutely certain – that some scholars I could name, men of by no means negligible reputation, when they read that attack by Lefèvre were anxious on my behalf; and that when my defence came out, they laid aside all their fears and expressed their satisfaction at my innocence. How many people do you suppose there would have been among those who read Lefèvre's attack on me with some attention, who would balance what we wrote one against the other, seeing that most men would have thought me sufficiently condemned by the fact that I had been attacked by Lefèvre, and attacked to such a tune that I was unable to reply?

And on this point you use arguments of which (if you don't mind my saying so) you ought to be ashamed. First, when you say that I have reached a level of reputation which makes it needless for me to depend in future on eulogies from other men; then you go on to say that Lefèvre touched on me in the course of defending his own writings, when at that point there was no call for him to mention me at all; besides which, you call my *Apologia*, which is short considering the size of the issues involved and the speed with which it is known to have been put together, a 'long and carefully thought-out

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270 act] Cf Ep 896 introduction.
272 Lucian] *De saltatione* 83
278 You say] Ep 810:79–83
280 you admit] Ep 810:352–6
282 limit the time] Erasmus is thinking of the waterclock; cf Ep 867:21n.
294 you say] Ep 810:87–99

defence'; lastly, you assume that I should have run no risk in the world of scholars, even had I not replied to Lefèvre or had replied carelessly. I have never sought for reputation or aimed my labours at any target of the kind – a charge, my dear Budé, which you bring against me rather often. I have not reached such a pitch of reputation that it is safe for me to hold my peace when someone brings charges against me such as Lefèvre brought, nor is my reply to him biting or savage, but friendly and fairminded. It moves me not at all that your language makes so little of something in reality so outrageous – 'one who somehow or other casts some reflection on you' and 'at some point thinks differently, as often happens, about what you have written' and 'if any author passes some wrong judgment on you.' These astonishing understatements, when the facts are known, are not much less outrageous than if, in consoling a man who has had an elephant stolen from him, one were to call it the mark of a dismal spirit to be cast down by the loss of some mere paltry quadruped, or if one told the loser of an enormous emerald that it is unmanly to let oneself be tormented by the loss of a single coloured stone.

But suppose we attribute all I have mentioned hitherto to your sense of humour, I still find in you a lack of consistency. Though in a later letter you declare me the winner, you call my defence at this point 'wrong' and 'disputatious.' Then in the Greek that comes after that you have softened a little and allow me eloquence, but with the proviso that I have no system or method of using it, exactly as if you were trusting a madman with a sword. Then you expect me to produce the entire works of Jerome, as though I have justified an error of my own by his example. Quite the contrary: I maintain that I did not return a ferocious answer, as he did, though I was under greater provocation than he was. So that it is no longer relevant when you maintain so loudly that Jerome and Augustine were only human; for it is abundantly clear that you are only jesting when you say you half wonder whether it was because of what he wrote against Rufinus that Jerome was brought before the judgment-seat of Christ and whipped. For that famous dream, as he tells us himself, came to him when he was a youth, and he was

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318 a later letter] Ep 896:63–7

319 at this point] Ep 810:107–33: Erasmus continues his scrutiny of Budé's letter line by line.

330 that famous dream] A vision, taken seriously at first, in which Jerome had beheld himself being accused before God's tribunal of excessive love for the pagan classics. Later in his life he believed that the experience was a dream of no consequence (cf 'Vita Hieronymi' *Opuscula* 153–4, 176–7). Jerome's dream had symbolic importance for Renaissance humanists and for Erasmus in particular. In reply, Budé admitted his lack of familiarity with Jerome; see Ep 915:86–90.

an old man when he wrote against Rufinus, and he was writing to Augustine later still.

I pass over deliberately much that you invent at your own sweet will: when you say, for example, that I gave you a rough passage in my long letter as though you had betrayed our friendship and sided with my opponent or reduced the current value of my works by the excessive freedom of your letters. Anyone who reads this will at once look for this quarrelsome letter of mine; while in the letters which survive I have not so far given this topic a single word. After that, you mock me in your most ironical vein for having added in passing that all orthodox writers ancient and modern are in the same position in which Lefèvre puts me; for I myself was negligible, as far as that topic is concerned. Granted that those distinguished characters need no defence from me, I shall certainly be seen to have had more excuse for defending against Lefèvre a view which I share with so many eminent men. Besides which, let them be never so eminent, no one is ever blamed for defending even the greatest from false accusations; are there not people who write books to defend Christ himself against impious calumnies? Nor is it sufficient compensation for me to make common cause with men of the greatest distinction, if they are excused for their antiquity while I am called to account.

What follows in your letter is much the same. I had written that had I met Lefèvre's attack by attacking him myself, I could plead the familiar and universal principle that the use of force is justified in repelling force, though I maintain that I did not take advantage of my rights; and yet you argue against me as though I had admitted using them. He attacks me with innuendoes, and I reply with arguments: is this using force to repel force? You say that this clause was not incorporated by the Supreme Judge in his law or code of practice; and yet rank upon rank of theologians recognize the principle, which they would hardly do, I suppose, if it conflicted with Christ's prohibition. How can you find that I have failed to respect the limits of justifiable self-defence, when in return for being attacked with unpleasant insults I discharge no insult in reply? Unless you judge it equivalent to an insult if I reject a malignant attack and the resulting unpopularity falls of its own accord on the man who spread the lie. What am I to do if you find my *Apologia* rather too long and too outspoken? I adjusted the length to suit my own feelings, not having access to yours as a standard. Nor is there any reason to cast the blame for this mistake on friends who spurred me on. I took

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334 much] Cf Ep 810:134–42.
352 What follows] Ep 810:159–65; cf Ep 778:197–202.
362 justifiable self-defence] Cf *Codex Justinianus* 8.4.1.

no one's advice except my own. It was printed almost before anyone knew that it had gone to press. I made haste all the more to avoid being held up for long by a business as unpleasant as it was necessary. What I had to do was dictated by the facts. I am sorry that I was attacked by the last man I would wish; but so far am I from repenting of my *Apologia* that if anyone were to attack me today like that, and attack me without my deserving it, I should prepare a similar *Apologia* tomorrow, whether milder or less mild I cannot say. This is the one form of dispute in which gentleness does not appeal to me; and yet in that *Apologia* of mine, whatever its length, you will find less bad temper than in your friendly and humorous and witty letter, in which you divert yourself at your friend's expense.

Here is another of your highly witty observations: 'Who would be surprised if you were to make him unhappy on a point where you are not happy yourself?' Just as if an innocent man on trial before the Areopagus for burglary or sacrilege were to abandon his defence simply because he disapproved of being compelled to defend himself. The dissatisfaction felt by Lefèvre is very different from what I feel myself; my own discomfort is like that of a man bitten by a scorpion, while he applies the antidote. So this remark is not so eminently witty as it seems at first sight. Then you go on to add that I have made an attack on you, when I accuse you falsely of reducing the value of my work and making light of my *Copia*. You shameless talker! What you wrote about my poor books still exists. So far is it from giving me offence that I make excuses for it and put the best sense on it that I can. And you make me out to be a scandalmonger; you find me lacking in fairmindedness because I try to blacken your name among my friends – all of whom you represent as raging like wild animals because two or three of them were not entirely satisfied with your attack on my *Copia*. I have not forgotten, you see, what you wrote to Tunstall about my pieces; but since you say everything in jest, where are you more likely to be only jesting than in the place where you speak so highly of my work?

But, after joking all this time, you say that you propose to be serious in what follows. You repeat that in my letter I do not hesitate to treat you as a hostile witness, though nothing of the sort can be found anywhere. But what you say seriously now, you said not long ago in jest. Then you remark that even if both of us asked you to arbitrate, you would not willingly

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380 witty observations] Ep 810:191–3
382 Areopagus] Cf Ep 915:91n.
387 you go on] Ep 810:206–9; for *De copia* see Ep 260 introduction.
396 to Tunstall] Ep 583
399 you say] Ep 810:212–18, also for the following comments
402 in jest] Ep 810:196–205

undertake it. Where has that peacemaker vanished to, whom I was scaring away with lowered horns? After that, you urge me to resume our original friendship. Get Lefèvre to accept your idea if you can, for I have been urging him to do this myself in ever so many letters, not the least deterred by the malice of those who keep saying that I do this from fear, not from a true Christian spirit. I undertook that I would alter all the passages in which I had differed from him, if he would either alter or defend the points I had noted. I promised that I would do my best to extinguish my *Apologia*, provided he would call off his attack. Finally I advised him, besought him even, to publish something that would make it clear that we were agreed in spirit and thus deprive those who wish good or ill – some to him, some to me – of their excuse for fighting our battle for us. He never paid me the courtesy of a reply, even by way of a third party; and yet I still do not cease to be friends with Lefèvre. After all which, you make me out to be violent and savage. You express the hope that this minor damage to my reputation will somehow heal over. Yet what else is the result of that letter of yours, which deplores the fate of both of us at such length and exaggerates the whole business in the most tragic tones, except to rub off the scab which had somehow begun to close the wound?

On top of that you urge me to follow your example and never hereafter, however much I am attacked, to descend into the fray – as though your affair and mine had anything in common! In your discussions, maybe, someone objected that you had explained some passage in a way that he himself could not approve. Let him be ever so successful, no penalty awaits the defeated party except that you may be thought to have been careless at that point, or to have overlooked something which did not occur to you or even which you might not have read. In my case the rules of the contest are very different – if indeed contest is the word, when an attempt is made on my life and all I do is to defend myself. And yet you too wish one exception to be reserved for you, in a cause by no means parallel: 'if you see your silence being turned to your discredit or likely to do you serious harm.' But why are you unwilling for me to enjoy this exception too? For when you say it would have done no harm to my reputation to have held my tongue, you are not, in

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409 I undertook] The promise was repeated in the *Apologia ad Fabrum* (LB IX 20A), where Erasmus claimed that it was originally made in two letters to Lefèvre. They are now missing but were evidently prior to the *Apologia*.

410 I promised] Ep 778:184–6

412 advised him] Ep 814:27–9

418 express the hope] Ep 810:226–7

423 you urge] Ep 810:294–301

433 'if you see] Ep 810:300–1

my view, sufficiently convinced of this yourself, however much you attempt to convince me. I only wish I had plenty of friends like that, people of all-round intelligence and insight, who could give me definite instructions when and how far to answer my opponent. Friends of this kind are perhaps not to be had in our barbarous country; no, they are all as short-sighted as I am myself. Nor will I concede, my dear Budé, that you hate and abominate a venomous dispute any more strongly than I do. Nor do I think myself in danger of any such accusation, seeing that it was under compulsion and after such provocation that I replied to Lefèvre.

Then again when, in the middle of all this, you set me on a pinnacle of glory and declare the name Erasmus world-famous, and more of the same sort, I think you are simply jesting, however much you may declare you are serious; for there are other places too where you dress me in the lion's skin and make me out to be some great prophet of piety and literary high-priest, secure of immortality already and famous beyond any peradventure. And yet you talk to this reverend divine in the accents a mother would use to a small child; or rather, you are a brutal schoolmaster, frightening me and punishing me now with the cane and now the birch. In fact, whatever this glory is that you hope to share with me, when you say 'we who have long been slaves in the dreary and toilsome service of ambition,' I do not accept it, and recommend that you transfer my share to some other recipient. I should be a most unhappy creature had I sacrificed all those nightly vigils to ambition.

At this point you again make many somewhat rash assumptions: I indulged, you say, in mutual recriminations with Lefèvre, while it is characteristic of a good man that his 'innocence should rely on its own force and its own merits and not try to win acceptance by defending itself against other men's calumnies.' In my view, the good man is not he who takes no thought for his reputation, especially when it is attacked in this way and (what is more) in print. I need not go into details: what you say has been often humorous, often serious, often simply to be taken at its face value; you have been full of arguments, full of generalizations; but it all comes down to this, that you have no wish to see me suffer for having defended myself hitherto, but you warn me of danger if I add one word more. On the question at issue between us you make no pronouncement; you consider that it

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446 set me] Ep 810:314–16, 337–8
449 lion's skin] Cf *Adagia* I iii 66.
455 you say] Ep 810:308–9
461 while] Reading *quum;* Ep 810:348–50
470 warn me] Ep 810:330

should be adjourned. One point there is in which you find me deficient: my defence should be somewhat shorter, and more moderate in tone. My first point is that since, as I said before, I could not adjust the level of my style to suit everybody's feelings, I adjusted it to suit my own, especially as I was hurt rather than angry. If you bring into the account how much more time on the clock used to be allowed to the defendant than to the prosecutor, and at the same time compare my *Apologia* with Lefèvre's attack, you will understand that here too I have not been very grasping – all the more so if you consider the kind of accusation, and how much easier it is to throw mud than to wipe it off. That is why in certain types of case it is the custom to give defending counsel several spells of the clock above the traditional number. Again, I can only congratulate you on your happy temper, that citadel from which you cannot be lured down into the battlefield. Even so, you loose off long-range missiles from your citadel to such a tune that it is not hard to guess what you would be like, if you were to be shaken by a tenth part of the siege-train concentrated on me. You do not even feel all the battering-rams with which I am assailed on every side. The more happy you for not knowing what it is like! And I hope it may never come your way, this experience of being in conflict with such a tribe of monsters rather than men, who call themselves theologians and are merely purveyors of falsehood. I have no quarrel with theologians as a class, only with some I could name who are unworthy of that rank and title.

Just lately, if you please, there arose a little creature, pale and skinny – which might surprise you, for no man ever had a better conceit of himself – childishly crazed by a thirst for glory, turned Grecian overnight and two days ago Hebraist as well, so effectively that he allows no merit even to Jerome or to Reuchlin. With a natural gift for innuendo, he stops at nothing, tries his hand at everything to make himself a name; and this he thinks is the short cut. He does not deserve a reply, unless one should wish to return good for evil, and yet the little serpent is too venomous to be endured. No place is free from his falsehoods, as he rambles round street-corners, crossroads, markets, churches, monasteries. Everyone gets his letters, full of outrageous calumnies. Yet this mountebank has his followers, with their enthusiastic applause and cries of 'Bravo'; it is always so, every thistle finds its donkey. And while behaving like this he even thinks himself halfway to a halo, as though one qualified for perfect sanctity merely by abstention from

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472 adjourned] Ep 810:328–9
483 citadel] Ep 810:318–19
494 little creature] Edward Lee; cf Epp 898A, 998, Allen 1061:420–4.
505 every thistle] Cf *Adagia* I x 71.

adultery or gambling. I have not yet made up my mind how to deal with him. If he proves too much for my patience, I shall see to it that others are not as well pleased with him as he is with himself. I make no other promise for the moment, though he promises mountains of gold and more on his own account; and I shall ensure that out of me he gets more notoriety than glory.

But to return to your letter. You say the decision on the whole case is still within your power. Far from it: I never gave you power to decide. All I gave you was an invitation, if you so wished, to pronounce whether I did wrong in replying to Lefèvre, or in replying as I did; and so that you might do this with greater certainty, I asked you at your leisure to run through what we have both written. Yet on this point you clearly decide against me, first, for answering when I should have done better to have held my tongue; secondly, for answering too carefully and at too great length; and finally, for answering with some feeling. For whether the reading should be *ab angelis* (than the angels) or *a Deo* (than God) is not for me to decide; it is other people's business. Besides which, that the abuse Lefèvre heaps on me is nothing to do with me is clear on the facts; no judge need do the sum. Nor has anyone any call to protest that he was overborne by my powerful eloquence; I have no powerful eloquence and make no claim to have. He had only himself to blame; it was he who made an unfortunate choice of ground on which to challenge me.

Bishop Giustiniani has visited us at Louvain. He seemed to me a friendly person with no animosity in him; so I am sorry that I spoke slightingly of him in my *Apologia*. I had put a special mark on that page and

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511 mountains of gold] Cf *Adagia* I ix 15.

513 You say] Ep 810:213–14

522 *a Deo*] Cf Ep 778:203n.

524 clear on the facts] 'res ipsa loquitur'; *Adagia* III iv 49

529 Giustiniani] His visit took place during Erasmus' convalescence, shortly before 19 October. In Epp 877:13–17, 878:2–5 Erasmus said he had more 'vanity than venom' but also mentioned that he was holding an appointment from the French king. Thus a letter to Budé, destined for publication, offered a suitable context for the apology which was due to Giustiniani. In the *Apologia ad Fabrum* (LB IX 25C–E) Erasmus had called Giustiniani's psalter (cf Ep 810:397n) 'divine' and 'straight down from heaven,' but the praise was evidently ironical and followed by some openly critical remarks. Although Giustiniani was not named in the text, his identity was evident from the appended section of Lefèvre's commentary to which Erasmus replied. Giustiniani's name was added on the margin of Froben's edition of the *Apologia ad Fabrum* (February 1518), and despite Erasmus' promise to amend the passage the text was not changed in Martens' reprint of 1518 (f 9 recto, kindly checked for me by Dr R. Dogaer in the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique) or in subsequent editions.

given strict instructions to the printer that absolutely nothing was to be printed off unless revised by me; and that was the one page they printed without my knowing. When I found out, I made him reprint it with my revisions, for that was why I had marked it. If I have written nothing hitherto either to the king or to the bishop, this is your fault, because your letter cut short my hopes of concluding that business as I wished, although the question did not affect me very seriously. There was no definite offer from the bishop. Those who wrote in the king's name only held out hopes. Here, though a recent recruit to the prince's retinue, I was soon given a substantial benefice; an annual salary was earmarked for me, to which I had no definite right before. You Frenchmen were at that time on bad terms with the English, and I was entirely absorbed in the labour of revising my New Testament. My affairs being in this position, would you have advised me to show ingratitude to my friends, hazard my position in England, abandon the work for the sake of which I was neglecting everything else, and run off to France in pursuit of some hope, I know not what, chasing birds that never settle? Especially since my present position is by no means to be regretted. Finally, you know at what moment your last letter but one reached me. Why is it necessary for me to bind myself to this prince or that prince, on such conditions that I must cut myself off from all the others? I would rather be the servant of none and do good service, if I can, to them all.

But on this subject I have written to the bishop, as you told me to. I am delighted to hear you think well of Glareanus; I like him so much that I shall be quite content to have anything you can do for him regarded as a service to myself.

And now for a few hurried words in reply to your last letter. My dear Budé, how unreasonably you do exaggerate or diminish everything! I said in my letter that I was afraid our friends or our successors would take your mockery in a different way from what you intended; though I knew that, whatever it might read like, it sprang from a most friendly spirit. And here

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536 the bishop] Etienne Poncher

536 your letter] Cf Ep 744:21–5.

538 definite offer] A surprising statement; see Epp 778:33n, Allen Ep 1434:3–7.

539 Those who wrote] Apart from Budé, Guillaume Cop; see Ep 523.

539 Here … I was … given] See Epp 370:18n, 436.

542 on bad terms] prior to the treaty of London; see Ep 964:39n.

545 position in England] See Ep 694:11n.

547 birds] Cf *Adagia* III iii 44.

553 I have written] The letter is missing; cf Ep 915:158–9.

558 in my letter] Ep 869:6–9.

you go, stirring up a great commotion: 'the Graces were against you when you made friends with me, and I now regard you as clumsy, absurd, preposterous, obtuse, hard to get on with as a companion, and a proper blunderer, one who must be avoided and kept away with jests that are barbed and double-edged and full of menace, like a bull with hay tied round its horns.' None of these remarks of yours was prompted by my letter. Not that I forbid you to reply to a letter which you see in print; but pray consider what suits the standing of us both. For that letter of mine was written not so much with you in mind as other people whom I needed to pacify. Nor do I go for you with all these arguments to provoke you to reply, but to make reply impossible. I wished my dispute with Lefèvre to be plunged in oblivion, if that could somehow happen. Lastly, make no mistake: do not forget that that letter was printed some time before yours reached me. Nor was this my doing. There was a sudden danger that all Froben's presses might stand idle because the paper-maker was not up to date with his deliveries, and so I very reluctantly allowed Beatus Rhenanus to choose whatever he could find in my bundle of papers, for at the time I had not a free moment. The thing was done in a hurry, and he was not satisfied with his own choice. Even so I cut a good deal out of the letter of yours to which I was replying, where there were things I thought it better not to publish.

Again, I having described your letter as prolix, you take this to mean 'needlessly verbose and tedious,' and when I allow you credit for eloquence but state that in this dispute I may perhaps have a stronger case than you, you take it that I allow you only an empty plethora of words; and after that you call me in more than one place unduly suspicious. And yet this I can truly affirm about myself, that you will find few people who are less suspicious in their friendships than I am. Further, when you say that there is nothing in your letter that will not redound to my credit, it being always far from clear whether you are jesting or being serious, you will more quickly be taken to be jesting when you praise me than when you castigate me. Will that too redound to my credit, that you should make me out to be insolent to such

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562 'the Graces] Ep 896:7–17
568 in print] Ep 778
574 reached me] See Epp 810, 869 introductions.
577 to choose] Cf Ep 886:57n.
580 letter of yours] See Ep 744 introduction.
582 take this to mean] Ep 896:40–2
585 take it] Ep 896:26–7, related by Erasmus to his statement in Ep 869:16–17
586 suspicious] Ep 896:21–2
588 you say] Ep 896:58–9

an old friend, at one minute biting my lip in uncontrollable anger, at another stamping my foot or calling heaven and earth to witness, and in such a storm of rage that, like a modern Pythagoras, you were compelled to play solemn music to restore me to my senses? All which, to be sure, I can read with a smile, because I know very well that you were joking. My only fear is that other people may not give it the same meaning. But if you tell me to lay aside this fear, and your friends are of the same opinion, very well: mock me to your heart's content, give your pen some exercise, tear me in pieces, turn me upside down. You will never ruffle my feelings because I think I am certain of yours. If you agree, your letter shall be added to the next edition.

I took no exception to the passage you comment on, so well satisfied am I with everything you write; nor have I any hesitation in following blindfold anything you have ever written. So you must keep a look out, when you write to me, and have a care for the reputation of us both. But there is another place on the first page which made me pause a little; for two or three lines seemed to have been somehow inserted which did not quite fit the rest of the context: it begins 'Lefèvre who is given ... so often' and ends 'I regret the opening thus afforded' and so on. You might have a look at it.

Please greet your friends and my benefactors, Deloynes and Ruzé, for at the moment I have no leisure to write to more people.

Farewell, from Louvain, 22 December 1518

What I feel towards you Glareanus, if you like, can testify, and he is the most sincere of men. If this letter annoys you, remember that I have purged myself of my bad temper, which is what you told me to do. Anyhow, when you have read it, throw it in the fire, if you like, and I will do the same with my draft, though it is so heavily altered that I cannot read it myself. Get your own back on me in any way you please, provided you do not cease to be my friend and do not hold your peace. Though we have had more than enough of Lefèvre; we will find some more attractive subject. Farewell once more.

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593 biting my lip ... stamping my foot] Ep 810:51, 134

595 Pythagoras] A familiar anecdote of the early Greek sage; Boethius *Institutio musica* 1.1.

602 shall be added] In response to Ep 896:124–5

603 the passage] Cf Ep 896:120–3.

607 another place] Cf Ep 810:37n.

611 Deloynes and Ruzé] See Ep 869:17n.

907 / From Thomas More [London? 1518?]

This fragment, from the same source as Ep 845, was probably written not long after John Clement's arrival in Oxford, where his presence is documented for the autumn of 1518. He had been a tutor in More's house until he entered the service of Wolsey, who appointed him to his newly founded lectureship (cf Ep 967) in rhetoric in the University of Oxford; cf Epp 388:185n; LP II Appendix 56.

My Clement lectures in Oxford to a larger audience than anyone has ever had before. It is remarkable how popular he is; he is a general favourite. Even those who almost hate the humanities love him none the less; they attend his lectures and are gradually softening. Linacre, who, as you know, is not easy to please, praises and admires his letters so much that even I, who love the man more than anyone, am almost jealous of the massive eulogies he piles on him.

908 / To Thomas More [Louvain], 1 January [1519]

The date must be 1519 because of the meeting with Pucci at Basel (lines 16–18) and the state of Erasmus' health (line 25). This letter was first printed in the *Farrago*. The *Opus epistolarum* of 1529 adds a marginal note identifying the pamphlet in line 5 and a year date which is clearly wrong.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND THOMAS MORE, GREETING

Really the malice of my enemies knows no rest anywhere! They leave no stone unturned that may make mischief for Erasmus. In Cologne they had convinced two or three people that that scandalous pamphlet, fit only to be burnt repeatedly, was written by me, and many more would have believed them had I not been there in person to rebut such a shameless calumny. In case any suspicion of this kind has raised its head in your part of the world – and in such business guesswork as a rule is highly infectious – I send you a copy of my letter to Paolo Bombace; for it would take an age to write the same thing separately to more than one person. Those rascals with their false accusations are perfectly shameless, and somehow it is the crudest false-

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3 no stone unturned] Cf *Adagia* I iv 30.

5 pamphlet] The *Julius exclusus;* cf Epp 821:19n, 961:40–55.

7 in person] On his way to and from Basel; cf Epp 843, 867 introductions.

10 letter] Now missing; cf Ep 865:2.

hoods that are more willingly swallowed by the public. I had the idea some time ago of suggesting to the pope that he should put a stop to this form of lawlessness, which spreads wider every day; but the opportunity has not yet arisen. I did however speak to Antonio Pucci, the nuncio, at Basel, and he promised to do something about it; for he too felt the thing could not be overlooked.

When you send twelve angels in place of nine, I do not see what you get out of it. I foresee that the favouring wind of fortune will bear you away from me; but this I endure with the more resignation, because you at least are prosperous, whatever may be in store for me. There is an ancient custom of sending good-will presents to friends when they get better; but from your part of the world no one sends me so much as a letter, though I have recovered from so many illnesses.

As for certain theologians and their well-disguised trickery, it would make too long a tale to write. My letter to the bishop of Rochester will tell you part of the story, and I enclose a copy. Farewell.

1 January [Basel 1515]

909 / To the Reader Louvain, 1 January 1519

This letter is a preface for the first authorized edition of Erasmus' *Colloquia*. A glance at the texts from successive editions in ASD I-3 is sufficient to show that the *Colloquia* as the modern reader knows them did not even begin to take shape before the enlarged edition of March 1522 (cf Ep 1262). The character and purpose of the earliest editions is described in this preface, and so are some of the circumstances leading to their publication.

Between 1497 and 1500 formulae for polite conversation and letter-writing in

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16 Basel] Cf Ep 860 introduction and lines 27–9. For Erasmus' later protests against libel and slander see Allen Ep 1053:421 and corresponding note in CWE.

19 twelve angels] As the result of an embarrassing confusion More had recently been asked to pay for a gift of twelve angels which had really been pledged by Mountjoy (cf Epp 829:2n, 895:2–3). It appears that he reacted with typical generosity by sending twelve angels of his own, perhaps as a new year gift. The reference to nine angels could conceivably be another coy joke acknowledging a gift from More (cf Ep 829:2–3). After Pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory the Great it was commonly assumed that there were nine orders of heavenly angels; thus More's gift of twelve coins was in excess of the standard number.

20 favouring wind] Cf Ep 829:6n, cf *Adagia* II v 16.

25 illnesses] Cf Epp 847:7n, 867.

27 Rochester] Apparently an appeal to John Fisher for support against Lee and his friends in Louvain (cf Epp 886 postscript, 898A introduction). Fisher's reaction induced Erasmus to reiterate his complaints; cf Epp 936:34n, 937:4–13.

good Latin were being assembled by Erasmus for the benefit of his pupils in Paris. He lost sight of this text, but a manuscript survived in the hands of Augustinus Vincentius Caminadus (cf Ep 130:108–9n), who also had access to other early compositions by Erasmus (cf Ep 131:16–17). According to Erasmus Caminadus used these as well as his own questionable learning to produce a text which was finally sold to Froben through an intermediary, Lambertus Hollonius (cf Epp 904 introduction). Froben published it in November 1518, and several reprints followed promptly. This first edition was clearly unauthorized, yet in this letter Erasmus' displeasure is directed primarily against Caminadus, who had been dead for a decade or so, while Froben and his associates are spared any blame. In 1536, in contrast, Hollonius was made out to be the main culprit (cf Ep 3100). There is no clear evidence that any one had played false. Before going to Basel in 1518 Erasmus had tried to recover another manuscript of the *Colloquia* from Roger Wentford (cf Epp 772, 833), so in Basel he must have mentioned that he planned to publish such a work. Moreover, Hollonius, who took the manuscript to Basel, had been recommended to Froben by Erasmus himself, and Beatus Rhenanus, who acted as an editor, had repeatedly been given a fairly free hand with the publishing of Erasmus' texts. In his preface to the unauthorized edition (BRE Ep 80; ASD I-3 29–30) Beatus stated clearly that Erasmus had not seen the text and would very likely wish to make further changes in addition to his own corrections. In fact Erasmus quickly resolved to publish an amended version of the unauthorized publication – *Familiarum colloquiorum formulae* (Louvain: Martens 1 March 1519; NK 2866). This authorized edition too was followed by several reprints in quick succession, all including this letter to the reader. To obtain the text here translated, Allen used both the version that was published with the first authorized edition and some of the variants found in a shorter version included in Froben's reprint of May 1519.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE YOUNG WHO DESIRE TO LEARN, GREETING

It is not hid from me, gentle reader, that what I say is out of place; but as no more suitable moment presents itself, I thought it right to issue this brief warning. There has recently appeared a book of everyday conversations, *Colloquia familiaria*, which is commonly fathered on me, and the schoolchildren are getting it by heart, I am told, with my name to it. Even were it the ideal book out of which to learn good classical Latin, I should still not wish to see ascribed to me what is not mine. But as it is, since there is so much in it that reeks of pure barbarism, I will explain in brief the state of the case.

Once upon a time, I freely admit, when I was in Paris more than twenty years ago, I did set down some lightweight material, when I had a mind to gossip after supper by the fireside, and take my slippered ease, as Horace has it, on phrases useful in daily intercourse and on conversation over the dinner-table. Besides that, I had written a very crude paraphrase on the *Elegantiae* of Lorenzo Valla, not surprisingly, as I wrote it for a numbskull rather than a human being; though this was likewise fruitless, as he was an ageing parrot with a headpiece full of lead. In addition, I had already produced some sort of outline of my *Copia* and had started my *De conscribendis epistolis* on the art of letter-writing, and another book against barbarians, which by the help of certain persons I lost sight of. Above all, I gave my pen daily practice in writing letters to my acquaintance, throwing off any kind of nonsense to one or two dear friends and rattling on in the way one man talks to another in the intimacy of a glass of wine between friends and cronies. There was an inexhaustible snapper-up of these trifles in the person of Augustinus Caminadus, with whom I was intimate at that time for several months. It was he who put together this book, like Aesop's crow, or rather, like a ballad-seller he strung together his mish-mash as a cook pours his many galley-pots into one, adding names and headings and other bits of his own invention, to make sure that like the ass at Cumae he would give himself away. For even to say nothing worth saying in Latin is not as easy as some people think.

I am still able to state definitely, in respect of each part, where he took it from. And there are people who still have in their possession rough papers of the kind I speak of, who confess this and recognize that I speak the truth. With this sad stuff he imposed on certain stupid people without my knowledge, with a view to scraping together some coin, the poor starveling creature. Nor can I allow Beatus Rhenanus, a fairminded man and a good

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13 Horace] *Satires* 2.1.73

16 *Elegantiae*] Cf Ep 23:108n.

16 numbskull] Apparently Robert Fisher; cf Epp 62, 71 introductions.

19 *Copia*] Cf Ep 260.

19 *De conscribendis epistolis*] Cf Ep 71.

20 barbarians] The *Antibarbari;* for the loss of Erasmus' manuscript cf Ep 706:38n.

25 snapper-up] Literally Laverna, the goddess of theft; cf *Adagia* IV i 3.

26 Caminadus] Cf Ep 131.

27 Aesop's crow] Fable 200 (Halm); in Babrius' collection 72

30 ass] Wrapped in the skin of a lion, the ass managed to elude his masters, who had never seen a lion, until a visitor arrived at Cumae who knew better: *Adagia* I iii 66.

34 rough papers] Of the texts mentioned above only *De conscribendis epistolis* was published at the time, edited by Ulrich Hugwald (Basel 1519).

friend, to defend me on the ground that I wrote this book twenty years ago. Whether in the intervening years I have gained anything in knowledge or judgment, I leave to others to determine; but undoubtedly Latin, and what they call classical literature, was far more at my finger-tips then than it is now, though even then my holding in these subjects was below the average.

And now, dear reader, a few examples, from which you may guess the remainder. Who ever said *dare salutem* for *dicere salutem,* which he puts on page a.iii? Or, as on page a.vi, *Me in derisum habes*? Again, on the same page he has added *Occupationes tuae excusationis locum habent* out of his own head. On page a.vii *Ago tibi gratias qui litterarum fasciculis nos onerasti,* he has not noticed that causal *qui* demands the subjunctive, *qui nos oneraris.* On page a.viii, *Ad clunes mundandos,* he has put *clunes* for another part of the body. Again, in the same place, *Laudo te virum praestitisse*: did any Geta ever speak like that?

But I refrain from further instances, for fear my reader will find me tedious; and these are in the first few pages! Yet in these there are other things too which I cannot approve; among them *qua valetudine es praeditus*? Perhaps a doctor might properly so express himself if he were enquiring about a patient's permanent state of health, and not about his condition at the moment.

You have been warned; I have done my duty. Henceforward whoever voluntarily deceives himself has only himself to thank. As for Hollonius, if he scraped together a little coin out of this, I do not grudge it him. But I do not propose to thank the man, unless he does something else to earn my gratitude; and if he continues, I shall reckon him not so much Hollonius as wholly felonious. I know it is no trifling injury to publish under my name something that is not mine, particularly while I am still alive; but like Balaam of old, who hardly flinched when his ass spoke to him because he was so used to marvels, I am so hardened to more serious affronts that these light ones rouse me less. Otherwise the whole thing would be not far short of outrageous, even had I really written the book; unless we are to give to any casual person the right to print and publish to the world whatever we may scribble when testing a pen, or in our childhood, in our off-moments, in our

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39 defend me] In the preface Beatus had written for the unauthorized edition; cf introduction.

42 is now] Cf Ep 704.

44 a few examples] From the unauthorized edition; in the authorized all were emended by Erasmus; see ASD I-3 32–8, 76–82.

51 Geta] A rough character in Terence's *Phormio*

65 Balaam] Cf Num 22:28–32; the statement here is repeated with slight changes from the *Apologia ad Fabrum* (LB IX 47E).

cups, in love, or in anger. What impertinence, to ascribe to me in my own lifetime whatever anyone thinks fit and play fast and loose with another man's reputation! And yet, since I saw that the book was being eagerly snatched up everywhere, I have read it through and corrected it, for fear that the young might be taken in by this specious use of my name and be contaminated with bad Latin. Gentle reader, farewell.

Louvain, 1 January 1519

910 / From Philippus Melanchthon Leipzig, 5 January 1519

This is the earliest known letter in the exchange between Erasmus and Philippus Melanchthon, who had been professor of Greek in Wittenberg since the autumn of 1518 but had gone to Leipzig to attend the New Year's fair. Although they may not have exchanged formal letters before, Melanchthon had already given ample proof of his admiration for Erasmus (cf Epp 454, 563:56–60). This letter, which evidently accompanied Ep 911, was published in the *Farrago*. Erasmus replied with Ep 947.

PHILIPPUS MELANCHTHON TO
DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

Greeting in Christ Jesus. It gives me great pain, my dear Erasmus, that the false accusations of a worthless wretch should make a man of your distinction suspect me of wishing to criticize and act as censor of your noble commentaries on the Scriptures. It would be absurd for any man of straw to make trouble for a master mind, and ungrateful too to do a disservice to one who has done so much for us. On this point I appeal to your own feelings: can you think that a man knows so little how to behave and has such a cursed passion for finding fault, who was previously recommended to you by the

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910

4 wretch] Cf Ep 947:3n.

5 suspect me] Cf Ep 877:7–9. The charge was repeated by Johann Maier von Eck in an *Excusatio … ad ea quae falso sibi Philippus Melanchthon … adscripsit,* 25 July 1519. Melanchthon replied with a sincere tribute to Erasmus in his *Defensio* against Eck; cf Melanchthon *Werke* I 16–17.

6 man of straw] This seems to be the meaning, but it is a mere paraphrase; literally 'for a chickpea Dionysus to interrupt with his clamour the supreme Jove himself.' Melanchthon seems to take 'a Dionysus not worth a pea' to mean a man of no account (the phrase comes in the Greek proverb-collections); in *Adagia* II vi 47 Erasmus, supposing it to mean a *thing* of no account, explains it as a reference to the worthless drinks brewed from other vegetable substances by nations which cannot grow the grapevine, of which Dionysus was patron.

approval of men you can trust, and not without good success? I beg you, for pity's sake, please realize how that slanderous villain (I can guess pretty well who it is) has taken unfair advantage of my innocence, and please believe that I reckon all my work, if it comes to anything, to be indebted to you as its only begetter.

I know you must think the question too trivial to be worth pursuing; otherwise I might perhaps cite witnesses of my good intentions who would carry weight with you. Though one thing, to be sure, I do not entirely deny, that at first some points in your paraphrase struck me as a little far-fetched; but when I thought them over more deeply, I changed my mind. It was here, I well know, that the man found his chance to make trouble. But while the opinions of scholars ought to be correct, they ought also to be unfettered. In all other respects my conscience is clear; if I have gone wrong on this one point, forgive me for Jesus Christ's sake. I do not yet read my Erasmus with so little attention that I have yet to learn from the man himself what I owe to my teacher and to a brother in Christ.

I write briefly because I write in great distress of mind and on the spur of the moment, and at a difficult time too. Martin Luther, who is a keen supporter of your reputation, desires your good opinion at all points. Farewell, my eminent friend.

Leipzig, 5 January 1519

911 / From Petrus Mosellanus — Leipzig, 6 January 1519

Peter Schade (cf Ep 560), called Mosellanus as a native of the Moselle valley (cf line 23), had taught Greek at the University of Leipzig since 1517. He had close contacts with Melanchthon, his colleague at Wittenberg, and this letter was written during Melanchthon's visit to Leipzig (see Ep 910 introduction). It was answered by Ep 948 and published in the *Farrago*.

TO DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, THE THEOLOGIAN, FROM PETRUS MOSELLANUS, GREETING

As I hope for Christ's blessing on my studies, Erasmus, dearest to me by far of mortal men, I have often smiled before now at the effrontery of men who interrupt with their foolish letters those labours of yours which are a blessing to the whole world; and here am I doing just that, under pressure

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11 men you can trust] Cf Epp 560:27–31, 563:56–60, and for the success Ep 605:35–7, and Erasmus' tribute to young Melanchthon in the 1516 edition of the New Testament, notes on 1 Thessalonians 2 (later removed).

19 paraphrase] The *Paraphrasis in Romanos;* cf Ep 710.

28 Luther] See Ep 933.

from other people. There is here an immense crowd of sophisters and what you call with no less justice than elegance windy word-spinners, with whom I and a few other defenders of the public respect for literature wage continual war. In this contest those who have attracted the majority of the young men to their own party are the winners. Great efforts are deployed by both camps, in brave deeds on our side, in ambushes and trickery on theirs. 'Cunning or valour? In the foe, who cares?' Yet Mars, who in battles of this kind is in no hurry to change sides, inclines to favour us. Nor do I doubt that if you, like some patron Minerva, stand at our right hand propitious, we shall soon be singing our song of triumph.

The worthless fellows on the other side, who are sworn foes to all liberal studies and especially to Greek (which I teach here publicly by the liberality of George, the prince of our Mysia, not as it deserves, but as best I can and with all my heart), are always telling the crowd of inexperienced young men that, however much one ought to learn Greek (a concession I have won with difficulty after all these conflicts), yet it cannot be learnt from a German or (such is their notion of Trier) a semi-Frenchman like myself; for, say they, if you were any better at this language than the common herd, you would surely long ago have made friends somehow, at least by a mutual interchange of letters, with Erasmus, the father of this time-wasting subject (as they think it) in Germany. And then, if a man has time and money to waste in any case, he ought to seek his knowledge of Greek from Italians and Greeks. In this strain these clever fellows go on croaking and try to dissuade the young from attending lectures on Greek. As though a man like you honoured with his friendship only men like Budé, Lascaris, Musurus, Bembo, Leoniceno, Aleandro, Reuchlin, Birchemer, and did not also, approachable and kindly as you are, do what you can to meet the selfish

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911

8 word-spinners] Mosellanus uses the Greek word *mataeologus* in Titus 1.10 translated 'vain talkers,' which is not so very far from *theologus*, a theologian.

13 'Cunning ... cares?'] Virgil *Aeneid* 2.390

13 Mars] an allusion to Homer *Iliad* 5.831 and 899; it recurs in Ep 951:39 and more than once in the *Adagia*.

19 Mysia] The province of Meissen, which is dignified with the classical name of Mysia in Asia Minor, was the main territory of the Albertine duchy of Saxony, and the city was one of Duke George's residences.

32 Bembo] Pietro Bembo of Venice (1470–1547), papal secretary and from 1538 cardinal, was an outstanding figure among Italian humanists and writers. Erasmus knew him by reputation from his own stay in Venice and corresponded with him from 1529 to his death; cf Allen Ep 2106 introduction.

32 Birchemer] Mosellanus used the same form of Willibald Pirckheimer's name in Ep 560:30.

requests of many ordinary people (how could you do otherwise?), besides revealing clearly enough to a sensible reader in various places in your works, though it is not your immediate subject, what your opinion is of Italian teachers.

Not that this sophistry would draw very many away from me, if we were not all by nature averse from hard work, and if this conviction about Italian scholarship, from which Germany is not the only sufferer, was not supported also by the votes of those whom I find to be enemies when they should be allies, and who, I rather think, do much more harm than the barbarian blockheads themselves. I mean the people who, having picked up three or four Latin figures of speech, advertise themselves, some as poets and some as orators, finding (happy men!) an audience worthy of them, in front of whom they declaim with great temerity against Greek studies as having (if you please) little or nothing to contribute to Latin. One impious wretch of this kidney has been carried by some accursed northern gale into the heart of our university all the way from Dalmatia. In a word, you will give me great pleasure and will also delight the students of our liberal subjects here if you will write me even one letter to show your feelings towards us. Do this in return for the affection I bear you, having followed you scrupulously as my guide in literary matters since my boyhood; do this in pity for those poor imbeciles who do not wish well to all men of good will. Must I be the only person towards whom you are not your true self? Surely not; for elsewhere, like your favourite Paul, you are all things to all men, in order that (so far as in you lies) you may bring them all to a sound mind.

Johann Eck, our champion sky-walker and master head-in-air – like Socrates in Aristophanes, he looks down on the gods out of a basket – is about to descend into the cockpit of disputation to fight for his life (his fees, that is) against Andreas Karlstadt, the archdeacon of Wittenberg. The arena will be the thinking-shop of our theologians, and the judges too will be the

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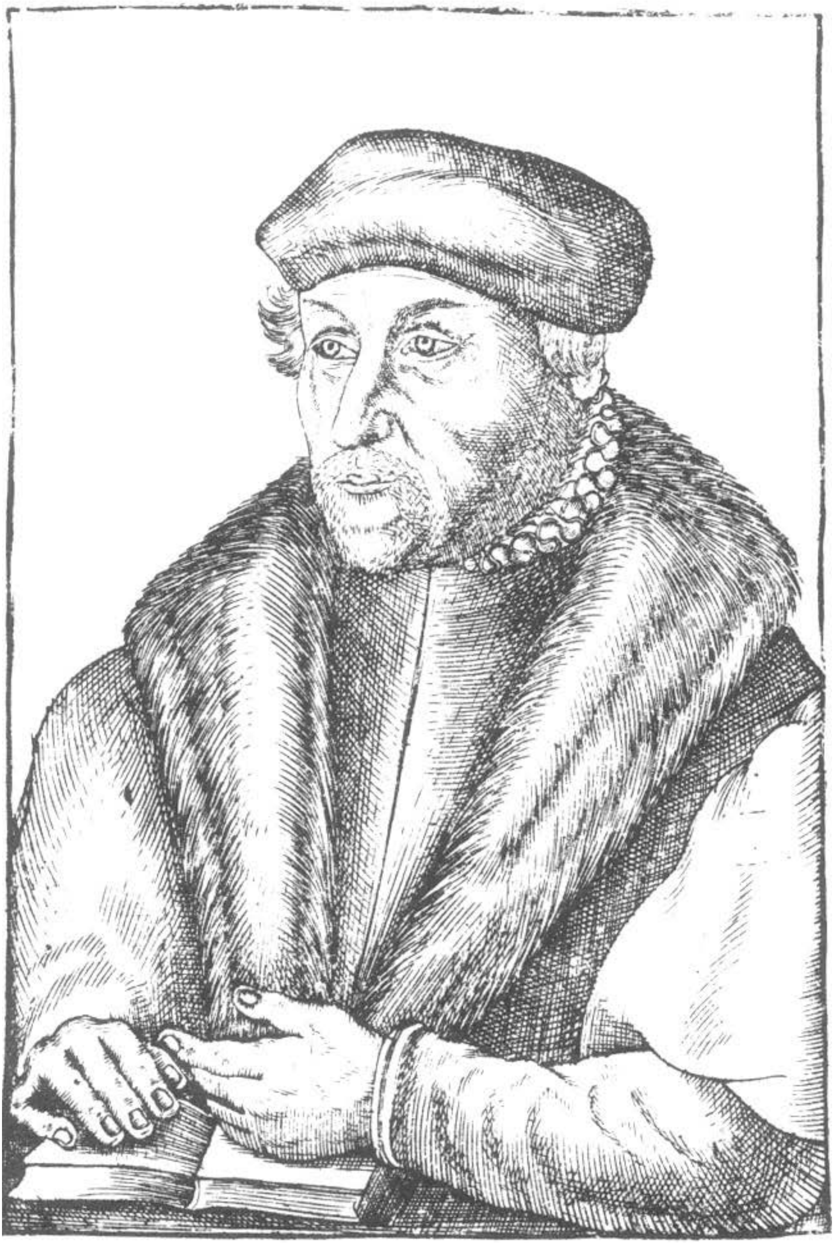
48 wretch] Tranquillus Andronicus Parthenius of Dalmatia. He had arrived in Leipzig in the early summer of 1518 and had given some lectures; see Ep 991 introduction and Allen IV 617.

56 Paul] 1 Cor 9:22

59 Aristophanes] *Clouds* 225, 226

61 Karlstadt] Andreas Rudolf Bodenstein (c 1480–1541), called after Karlstadt on the Main, his native town. He came to Wittenberg in 1505 and there received a theological doctorate in 1510 and a chair of theology. Since the Ninety-five Theses he had become a fervent supporter of Luther, and his attack on Eck's 'Obeliscs' (cf Ep 872:25n) provoked the Leipzig disputation (cf Ep 948 introduction). But his unimpressive performance at the debate was an ominous beginning for his radical role in the Reformation, which forced him to lead an erratic, unhappy life.



Andreas Rudolf Bodenstein of Karlstadt
Contemporary woodcut by unknown artist
Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Bern

local word-spinners. Our great chief himself is invited by Eck to attend – the donkey listening to the lyre, with a vengeance. The day has not yet been fixed, but great preparations for the contest are going forward on both sides. One of them will bring a claque of Augustinians; the other will produce a proper party of Preachers, for they never fail to turn up when their daily porridge is called in question. People will flock from all quarters to watch the great fight, for 'tis a right noble pair of Scotists that we shall see matched. Shall I foretell what will happen? Uproar, followed by violence; and more blood shed in the fight, I fear, than you so entertainingly sketched for us in your chapter about Esernius and Pacidianus. Such will be the dénouement of the whole piece, for I know well what tempers are like on both sides. Democritus ten times over will find plenty to keep him laughing. The outcome, if worth hearing, shall be reported to you in full. I meanwhile shall play martial music to our paladins, to the tune of 'Be wise, bethink you of fierce valour now,' and as I watch them, I shall turn epic poet: 'Then leathern shields and glaives did clash, I wis.'

But whither do I wander? I have forgotten myself, rattling on to a doctor of divinity like you as though you were some familiar crony. Farewell, Erasmus dearer to me than life itself, and mind you live a long and happy life for the benefit of all men of good will.

Leipzig, feast of the Three Kings 1519

One thing I ask of you specially, in the name of Christ himself: do not let yourself be persuaded by those who speak ill to you of Philippus Melanchthon. Do not suspect anything to his discredit. He is an excellent young man, born for distinguished scholarship and piety no less.

912 / To Maarten Lips

This letter has been assigned a new date and is Ep 898A in this edition.

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63 great chief] Obviously not Luther, as was suggested in a marginal note in the *Farrago*, but perhaps Duke George of Saxony (the compromising words are in Greek). The disputation was under his patronage and took place in his castle, part of it in his presence. When Mosellanus saw the *Farrago* he complained (cf Ep 1123). As a result this passage was omitted from the subsequent editions.

64 donkey] Cf *Adagia* I iv 35.

72 Esernius] Cf *Adagia* II v 98; cf Ep 829:36n.

74 Democritus] Democritus of Abdera, a contemporary of Socrates, was known as the 'laughing philosopher' (cf Ep 618:65) because of his supposed distrust of reason and rejection of conventional theology and ethics: by contrast, Heraclitus was the 'weeping philosopher.'

76 'Be wise ... now'] Homer *Iliad* 6.112

77 'Then ... I wis'] *Iliad* 4.447, 8.61

913 / To Jan de Hondt

Louvain, 22 January 1519

Erasmus' autograph of this letter is in the British Library, MS Harl. 4935 f 26.

Jan de Hondt was the canon of Courtrai responsible for the payment of Erasmus' annuity; cf Ep 751 introduction.

Cordial greetings, my honoured Lord and more than ordinary friend. Hitherto you have sent the money for my annuity before the due date, and this time I hope it will not be inconvenient to send it now the date is past, which, if I remember right, is Christmas day. Pierre Barbier wrote to me from Spain that he had written to your Reverence on the subject; and I know you will gladly comply with his wishes. He has been nominated bishop of Paria. So I beg you to pay the money to the bearer of this letter. For I have been ill more than once and at death's door, which has meant great expense, and my journey to Basel cost a good deal of money. I would have sent you a receipt but could not lay hands on your form of words. Pray send me a second copy by this messenger; I will duly give it him in my own handwriting before he pays over the money. He is returning shortly and will bring you the document.

I send your Worship my best wishes. If there is any business in which I can be useful to you, you will find me ready to do all I can.

Louvain, 22 January 1519

Sincerely yours, Erasmus of Rotterdam

To the honourable Jan de Hondt, canon of Courtrai, my honoured and respected friend. In Courtrai

914 / From Christophe de Longueil to Jacques Lucas

Rome, 29 January [1519?]

Erasmus himself chose to publish this letter in the *Farrago*. It reappeared in the

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913

2 before the due date] Cf Ep 794:5n.

6 Paria] A coastal stretch of South America opposite Trinidad. It was discovered by Columbus on his third voyage and is mentioned under the name of Garcia in his report to Ferdinand and Isabella dispatched from Hispaniola. Nothing seems to be known about the erection of a bishopric there. For decades Barbier had been a humble chaplain, although the favour of Chancellor Le Sauvage may have improved his fortunes of late. In Erasmus' correspondence references to his rich benefice in the Indies always occur in a humorous context (cf Ep 476:15–17, Allen Ep 1225:348–52, 365–9), and in Ep 532 it is equated with Utopia.

7 ill] Cf Epp 847:7n, 867.

later collections of his correspondence and also in the numerous editions of Longueil's letters (at the end of the fourth book). Large sections were also included in Louis Le Roy's biography of Budé, first published in 1540 (cf Budé *Opera omnia* I, preliminary pieces). It received much attention in Erasmus' correspondence (see Epp 935, 1209, 1347) and in that of his friends (see AK II Ep 674, IV Ep 1490). It has often been examined by modern scholars (see, for example, Marie-Madeleine de la Garanderie and Margaret Mann Phillips in *Scrinium* I 42, 49–52, 349–50).

Christophe de Longueil (b Mechelen 1485 or 1488, d Padua 1522) came from a distinguished Norman family. He studied law and in 1515 was elected to the Parlement of Paris. In 1516 he went to Rome, supported, it seems, by the patronage of Louis Ruzé. He was already considered the Ciceronian par excellence and received much favourable attention. But he also aroused resentment by allegedly extolling the glories of France at the expense of Italy and had to leave Rome in May 1519. Meanwhile Ruzé obtained a copy of this letter and passed it on to Erasmus in March 1519 (cf Ep 935:8). Erasmus reacted with Ep 935, and in his dialogue *Ciceronianus* (1528) one of the speakers, Nosoponus, shows some resemblance to Longueil.

The letter is addressed to Jacques Lucas, dean of Orléans since 1510, who was in Rome between February and May 1519 to promote the canonization of St Francis of Paola. The year date is not indicated. P.A. Becker (*Christophle de Longueil*, Bonn and Leipzig 1924, 72) preferred 1518. But although the letter could well present Longueil's reaction to the *Epistolae sanequam elegantes* of April 1517 (containing Epp 522–3, 531, 533), Lucas' visit to Rome and the publicity suddenly gained by this letter in the spring of 1519 make the later date somewhat preferable. It may be noted, however, that this letter became a focus of attention at a time of heightened political tension when the two monarchs served respectively by Erasmus and Budé were competing for the imperial crown.

CHRISTOPHE DE LONGUEIL TO JACQUES LUCAS, DEAN OF ORLÉANS, GREETING

We shall never lack for topics if, as I said to you long ago, we stimulate ourselves to write by asking one another questions; and with this in mind I wrote to you not long ago and said I should be most grateful for a fuller explanation from you why your prince preferred Erasmus to Budé – a German not a Frenchman, a foreigner not a native citizen, a stranger not a

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914

6 preferred Erasmus] A reference to the generous terms by which Francis I had attempted to attract Erasmus to Paris; cf Epp 522:42–58, 926:37n.

man he had long known. As far as learning goes, I see no point at which Budé falls short of Erasmus, whether you choose to consider liberal studies or those proper to a Christian. As for their power as writers, in my opinion they deserve equal praise in such very different styles. Both are greatly blessed with abundance of ideas and language, but with a difference: one flows more broadly, the other in a narrower but deeper channel rolls down a great mass of waters. The one a fuller stream, the other clearer. In Budé I think I detect more muscle, more blood, more energy; in Erasmus rounded flesh, smooth skin, fresh colouring. One is more thorough, the other more ready; one fertile in epigram, the other in wit; one all intent on practical ends, the other above all on pleasing. Budé's weapons are industry, natural fertility, a serious impressive style; Erasmus fights his way to victory by skill and subtlety, he is so smooth and so readable. You can love Erasmus and wonder at Budé; you give Erasmus your allegiance and do as Budé tells you. In fact, the latter carries one forcibly along, the former wins one over by delight. One attracts by his charm, the other sweeps one away by force, strict in his choice of words and lucid in his exact use of them; if the subject calls for illustration, he is happy in metaphor, telling in epigram, versatile in figures of speech, in the overall air of what he writes noble, exalted, severe and splendid. Erasmus, on the other hand, all charm and modesty, takes his reader with him; eloquent, richly endowed with language, in arrangement workmanlike and elegant at the same time, full of examples and close-knit arguments and agreeable sallies. Budé is always wholly committed to what he writes but keeps his thunder and lightning chiefly for passages where the subject admits an attack on present-day society; Erasmus, even when attacking public morals, gives more the impression of defending his principles more in sorrow than in anger, and attempting a cure with poultices and salves and plasters and treatment with other bland applications of the kind, while the other man applies remedies which are painful but for the moment necessary, strong medicines and the knife and cautery, to attack deep down the advancing force of the disease.

In a word, if they set out to be historians, Budé would be more like Thucydides than Sallust, Erasmus more Livy than Herodotus. If they are to write poetry, the former will give us the deep thunder of some tragic or heroic piece, weighty in word and thought; the latter's inspiration will be more polished in comedy, in lyrics more exquisite, in elegy more tender. Yet he too can be lofty with another man's native force to support him; but in his own, he finds it difficult, just as the other would never lower his style even if he wanted to. In other ways, those higher qualities, though present in both, are more obvious in one, more hidden in the other; the result is the same, the manner different, so that a man would not go far wrong who said that one was born for oratory and one for the courts, one inspired by Pallas and one escorted by a party of the Graces.

In any case, to show you that 'nought is at all points blest,' as the poet says, or at least is capable of satisfying all tastes, let me tell you the shortcomings noticed in them by men who feel themselves to have made some progress in the literary way. Budé's fault they think to be that he is faultless; Erasmus', that to his own faults he is too kind. Budé, they say, is so careful to measure everything by the standard of the Ancients that he often forgets for whom he writes and makes music only for himself and the Muses; Erasmus gives his own genius so much rein, thinking nothing so current that it cannot honourably claim a place in his style sooner or later, that sometimes he muddies the waters. The former hints at his meaning rather than expresses it, the latter with his excessive flow of language chokes the crop with a rich growth of weeds. The former now uses an indirect approach and eddies round the point, now soars into rhetoric and thus he often overdoes it; the latter on a lower plane, bare and straightforward, is more prone to crawl along the ground. Erasmus to them is softer and more effeminate, Budé is harder and more austere. In short, one, they think, could be wonderfully popular with highly educated readers, the other with ordinary men as well, if when swept away by their own eloquence (to use their critics' words) they knew how to hold the balance and, while relying always on their own gifts, sometimes owed their style to the judgment and advice of other men. For since they are able to produce what results they wish, it is right, men say, that they should wish only for the best and not make a show and try to impress us; things have come to such a pass that we need help in good time, not entertainment out of season. Whatever the declared purpose of a book, we need to be scrupulously instructed in accordance with it, not held in suspense in a roundabout way by frequent and quite undisciplined digressions. Seneca and Pliny did indeed digress, but one of them sparingly, the other hardly ever; and even then it was never deliberately, but because the theme so presented itself.

So say the critics, whose opinion I do not accept forthwith for many other reasons, but especially because there have been eminent orators who established as the arbiter of eloquence not the professors but the public. But be it so: let us give a vote to no one but the learned; let our jury in this case be drawn solely from leaders of the literary world: who, I ask, in our own day is

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51 the poet] Horace *Odes* 2.16.27, 28

57 makes music] Cf *Adagia* III v 80.

62 weeds] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 8. pr 23

64 crawl] Horace *Ars poetica* 28

good enough to be rightly entrusted with so exalted a jurisdiction? Both parties will support their case not merely with weighty precedents but with arguments of the greatest force. They will say it is not they that write amiss but their critics whose judgment is distorted; the points objected to in what they write are not native weeds, but imported by unskilful readers; Erasmus will say that he had all men in mind, Budé that he is content with an audience of the few. So I myself make no decision, either because the cobbler (as they say) must stick to his last, or else because to me they come out even, balancing their faults, if they have any, by their virtues, or even outweighing them; for there is in them more to praise than to forgive. One thing I wonder at, which I mentioned at the start: why your prince, given Budé's great integrity and learning and eloquence, has preferred a German not a Frenchman, a foreigner not a native citizen, a stranger not a man he had long known.

Nor do I say this as one who looks askance at Erasmus' good fortune. I think as highly of him as any man alive, although I have never seen him face to face; and this because we share a common country, for we were born, as you know, to speak the same language and under the same government. I venerate him for his great intellectual gifts, for which I look up to him so much that it would be the sum of my ambition in the next twenty-two years (for he is that much older than I am) to reach, if not the literary eminence he now enjoys, at least the next thing to it. A selfish wish, you say; selfish, if you like, but one he would not wholly disapprove of. So I do not look askance at the reputation or the advantages of so great a man, whose eloquence I value more than all the wealth of France. But my reason for writing this is to ask you to tell me forthwith, if you can, why, having always neglected able Frenchmen, you are now beginning to despise Italians and pursuing Germans with such determination.

Farewell, from Rome, 29 January.

915 / From Guillaume Budé Paris, 1 February [1519]

This letter answers Ep 906 and is answered in turn by Ep 930 and more fully by Ep 1004. It was printed in the *Farrago*.

GUILLAUME BUDÉ TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

I have seen the comments you wrote on my letter, and full of kindness they

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91 cobbler] Cf *Adagia* I vi 16.

915

2 comments] Ep 906

were – kindness of a sort unfamiliar in you; everything in it made me very happy, but even so I suppose I should not have answered just now, being immersed in every kind of business, had you not forbidden me in your postscript to remain silent. You must not think me a man who sits back and does nothing: I have long been the father of a family and have now been blessed with a seventh son; I have lately bought a house and moved into it, arranging at the same time in a great hurry for the workmen to come in and do it up, while my books and papers lie in heaps meanwhile. During this transfer I went through my possessions, about which I was ill informed hitherto, so you must not think I did not take seriously your casual remarks about my being so rich. But how such an idea came into your head I do not understand, for it is in books and children that I have invested a great part of my worldly goods; this has always been my principle, and I have even made a point of it.

But how witty do you suppose I thought it when, in speaking of Epimetheus, you describe me as rattling on with a show of learning as though I had it all out of a notebook? So that I have a small store of the things you call good remarks put by as it were in ready money; and even those I ran the risk of losing, you thought, unless I had found a friend like you against whom I could discharge them. I remember you accused me of something of the sort on another occasion, though now I cannot find the passage. My good sir, you who have religious scruples against criticizing a friend even in fun, did you think that when I read you I am so hard of hearing that I would not have taken in properly what you said only once? Before your time we know the legal position of collectors of proverbs was this, that every man sufficiently interested was entitled to the use and enjoyment of the discoveries of Antiquity, on condition that he was seen not to usurp other men's property, but to use them as a man might pick flowers that had grown on land in common ownership and were available to the first comer. But now, since the publication of your volumes of proverbs, I suppose it will be lawful to use only such as you have ranged in their centuries and assigned as it were to their proper stations, as though a man who erects a fence round a

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8 seventh son] His name is not known; for Budé's family cf Epp 403:165–7, 989:25.

8 a house] In the rue Saint-Martin, now number 203. Elsewhere Budé described the amenities of the house and the nature of the repairs; cf M.-M. de la Garanderie *La Correspondance* 185 n 2, 277.

12 casual remarks] Cf Ep 906:89–97.

18 Epimetheus] Cf Ep 906:130–62.

22 I remember] Cf perhaps Ep 480:257–62.

piece of common pasture so as to shut out his neighbours could then lawfully maintain that he had acquired a prescriptive right and made it his own property. Which might be even more inequitable if you were to decide that the word 'proverb' has such a wide extension as would bring all witty, graceful, and humorous utterances within your jurisdiction.

But let it be granted that you had a right to do this, the regulation and determination of every part of the whole field of literature having by common consent been entrusted or relinquished to you: let it at least be permitted to use your proverbs on sufferance, as you observed of Epimetheus, and to ask your leave to make use of them, especially for those who are familiar with the conduct of business and know how to secure the title even to other men's property. But what an example of selfishness you offer us, that in that great sea, that ocean of Antiquity which by natural law is common to all (if we may believe the lawyers), one individual should give himself leave to pull out all the finest fish and debar all men from enjoyment of the fishing! Were you not satisfied with increasing your volumes of adages, repeated annually with so much labour until the flood of them spills over, and scooping up in your dragnet with its jealous meshes all the elegance and charm of ancient literature, but you must also look askance at others who follow in your footsteps? But if you are a good man, a man such as I have always supposed you to be, after reaping the wide fields of Greek and Latin until you have got yourself a great harvest of reputation, you will not be annoyed with me if I follow up, to glean what you either overlooked when faced with such plenty or neglected, good husbandman (close-fisted, even) that you are. But as it is, you are a little jealous and make trouble for the gleaners, though you have mown all the meadows of the Muses and reaped all the cornfields of the Ancients.

Now here's another thing I should much like to know, if I do not seem inquisitive. When you say that I am unwilling to lose the phrases I have put on one side, what about you? As you put out all these great tomes every day, until the supply of presses almost runs out and the printers can hardly spare a moment for anyone but you, do you pour these out on the spur of the moment under the influence of some prophetic frenzy without having the yarn of which they are to be woven laid up beforehand and I dare say all put

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38 the word 'proverb'] Down to line 85 Budé is responding to Erasmus' casual remark in Ep 906:139–43. Budé was extremely sensitive to accusations of plagiarism (cf Ep 648:58n). Apparently he feared, no doubt unnecessarily, that Erasmus' paragraph charged him with plunder of the *Adagia*.

65 printers] Budé was no doubt thinking of Martens and Froben. His statement is truer of Martens.

in boxes and labelled? Some say the things which now stream in procession from the press were all got ready seven years before. If I knew that to be true, I should welcome your generous spirit and your benevolence towards the public with every vote that I could muster; for what more admirable than to refuse to take with you to the grave the treasures you collected in your youth? To me it seems just as if some citizen of Rome richly endowed by all the Muses made up his mind to earn public applause by yearly and monthly largesse to the people and to distribute all his goods, deserving well of the community by sending tickets for his distributions even to the grandees and the upper classes. If only all those who are too fond of money had learnt to do the same and would distribute the fortunes they have made so greedily in charity before they die! We should not see so much wealth everywhere removed from circulation, condemned to life imprisonment and buried in dust. For as far as I am concerned, I do not deny that I have much stored up in my notebooks for the benefit of my friends, out of which I might one day have composed tomes not to be despised, had I been blessed with happier fortune and leisure for a literary life.

To pass on to the rest: you rightly make fun of me for not stopping to think when I wrote that about Jerome carried before Christ's judgment-seat, for I cannot plead that I was trying to be funny, as you unkindly suggest. I remembered hearing the story told and had not made a proper note of the Jerome passage. But you will grant me an amnesty, as this is not a capital offence – we might perhaps class it with your slip about the Areopagites, when you bring persons accused of theft before their tribunal. But while I do not deny that I have said many things in jest, I will never confess to such self-confidence as not to be a little ashamed if I am called a jester, even in jest. Nor did I make your friends, who are (I doubt not) good men and mild men, since they are your friends, rage like wild animals in my letter. Let it be admitted that some things I said were out of place, since so it seems to you, who are the arbiter of all times and places and things said; and to you I entrust myself and all I do, as I have in what I wrote to you about Tunstall, bidding you move anything that was out of place or badly arranged. Not only that, but I also authorize you to bring yourself down, gently or forcibly,

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69 Some say] An unfair charge; the many reprints of Erasmus' earlier works were due to demand. Throughout 1517 and 1518 he had laboured to revise the New Testament, yet he had also managed to complete a number of fresh publications, of which only some minor ones had been composed in his youth.

86 make fun of me] Ep 906:326–30.

91 your slip] Ep 906:382–3. The Areopagus dealt primarily with religious offences and major crimes such as murder and arson.

96 in my letter] Ep 906:394, followed by the reference to Tunstall

from the pinnacle of glory and reputation to which you say that I have elevated you in such unwelcome fashion; for you make so many difficulties about accepting the tributes offered to you that it might perhaps have shown more true modesty to reject them openly. Consider which of us is more entitled to his grievance: you complain that I have undervalued what you write; I take it hard that you should think what I say so important.

Yet what a fairminded man you are, and grateful by nature, when you call me the person responsible for your not writing either to the king or to the bishop, your great supporter! This is the reward for good news which I maintained you owed me. And on the other hand, how sharp you are – not to understand me even in that part of my letter in which I tried to bring to fruition for your benefit what we had decided on, so that all that was left for you to do was to hum and haw and make difficulties about the offers made to you from here! But like the shrew in the fable, you yourself have given the show away.

I rejoice to see you have purged yourself of your bad temper, so that when at length you come to us you will be Erasmus pure and simple. Certainly you have tried with all your might to sweat off that attack of spleen derived from a misunderstanding, the miasma of which has never upset me to the same extent; so do not be too jubilant in your victory over me, so that you find me harder to pacify. And so, if any dregs remain in the bottom of your heart, clean them out and purge yourself properly, now that you have, I hope, swallowed the pill contained in my letter. Though if Homer found nothing more outrageous than to be accused of impudence – a charge you rain on me like stones, no doubt to get practice in exchanging jokes with me – I do not see what you have left for yourself with which you can deal me a yet more splendid blow. Though if you have anything, I shall be a willing target: anything to give you satisfaction. I would however gladly persuade you of one thing: if that evil genius of yours is still tormenting you with tempests of this kind, you should turn your sword, or rather your pen, against that dried-up monosyllabic theologian who plans so much trouble for you, poor halfpenny creature that he is. For I seem to have given your indignation quite enough exercise already. For the time being I will lie low, in hopes of

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102 you say] Ep 906:446–7
109 call me] Ep 906:535–9
110 good news] Cf Ep 810:482.
112 my letter] Ep 810:441–79
115 like the shrew] Cf *Adagia* I iii 65.
117 purged yourself of] Ep 906:615–16
124 Homer] *Iliad* 22.414–15
132 theologian] Edward Lee; cf Ep 906:494–512.

watching more closely the confrontation between yourself and him if ever he pops up out of the hiding-place where he lurks; and I shall consider ways to beguile your indignation somehow or other, for as a friend you are nice and difficult to please and prefer your friends to butter you up. And so, if you please, write to Deloynes, not as my friend any longer but your own, who will keep you in play with letters sweet as honey; though he on his side complains already that two letters of his have had no answer. Ruzé hardly dared trust me to send you greetings on his behalf; I thought he was very reasonably indignant with you, for I showed him your letter which was so pleasant and charming on the surface and so bitter underneath. My advice to you therefore is to entrust yourself entirely to these friends, who know how to handle friendship with kid gloves. I meanwhile shall resume contact with serious things and bid a long farewell to the pleasantries that have failed to keep me on good terms with that eloquent pen of yours.

Another most unfair attack I had almost forgotten to mention: in quoting the words of my letter, you make out that I put 'you say' in the present tense instead of 'you will say,' as though I had actually invented words from some earlier letter of yours. This is what you complain of, although in fact I was using the figure anthypophora, maintaining not that you did but that you might have said so; for everywhere in my draft it has the future tense 'you will say.' So you have begun to attack me not merely with rhetorical subtleties, as your custom was, but with fabrications!

I have not yet spoken to the bishop since you wrote to him, though I have seen your letter. Farewell, and if this exchange of letters gives you any pleasure, start up some different topic. I leave that entirely to you.

Paris, 1 February

The passage which troubles you in my letter reads as follows in the draft, which I still have: 'Lefèvre, whom I have so often mentioned in honourable terms, is repaying me thanks of a kind; inadequate thanks at least in the opinion of many men. To me also it seems that he is acting more harshly towards me than agrees with his usual courtesy. I am sorry that this opportunity has been given, etc. Were you to announce at that stage' – this last phrase of mine means 'You ought to have added to your earlier remarks

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139 Deloynes ... Ruzé] For letters from Deloynes and Ruzé, now missing, see Ep 869:17n. For Louis Ruzé see also Ep 926.

150 quoting] Cf Ep 906:145n.

153 anthypophora] This rhetorical term is used for a rejoinder to the arguments of a hypothetical opponent.

157 wrote to him] Cf Ep 906:553n.

161 my letter] Cf Ep 810:37n.

the news of your proposed *Apologia*; for then perhaps my warnings would not have been quite so belated.' From which letter of yours I took this, I do not know; for at the time of writing I have not got my books arranged nor my papers sorted in this house into which I have now moved.

There's a letter for you; good Latin, beautifully written, and in my own hand. But it is only fair that you should let me do just as I please, especially as I have no friend who can act as my amanuensis and no leisure to look for one elsewhere; and it is disagreeable to write you a prim and proper letter. We are beginning to do everything here in a high imperious spirit since the death of Maximilian, so don't think you will find me any longer so very mild and fairminded. Farewell once more, and pray do not cease to be my dear friend: it was you told me not to remain silent.

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916 / To Erard de la Marck — Louvain, 5 February 1519

With the last texts for his critical edition of the New Testament finally dispatched (cf Ep 864 introduction), Erasmus resumed his work on the paraphrases (cf Ep 710). This letter is a dedicatory preface to the *Paraphrasis in duas epistolas Pauli ad Corinthios*, first published in Louvain by Martens with the colophon date of 30 January 1519 (NK 844). Some copies of the *Paraphrasis in Corinthios* were joined together with Erasmus' *Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii* (cf Ep 946), which was published by Martens with the date of 1 March 1519 (cf Allen's headnote). The date of this letter (Nones of February) was probably chosen to coincide with the anticipated publication of the paraphrase. Distribution had begun by 19 February (cf Ep 918), and Erasmus went straight on to compose the paraphrase on Galatians (cf Ep 956 introduction). Froben reprinted the *Paraphrasis in Corinthios* in March 1519.

Erasmus composed this preface after he had finally met the bishop of Liège (cf Ep 738); it may contain faint echoes of a legal presentation on behalf of Erard before the Diet of Augsburg (cf the preface to this volume), which was noticed by Luther and his friends because of a fierce attack upon the Roman curia; cf Ep 980; Harsin *Erard de la Marck* 241–52, 267.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PRINCE AND RIGHT REVEREND PRELATE ERARD DE LA MARCK, BISHOP OF LIÈGE, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Often had I heard your Highness' praises sung, both in letters from many

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172 beautifully written] Budé's handwriting was hopeless. Reading Ep 906:617–18, he recalled Ep 480:27–44.

177 Maximilian] He died on 12 January 1519 at Wels in Austria.

correspondents and in conversation, as of a person richly endowed with every quality and every gift that could be thought worthy of a prince; but while enjoying a few days of your society I found you such that my friends seemed to have given a niggardly and stinted – I would almost call it a jealous – account of your felicity or (it would be truer to say) ours. And so the situation was reversed. You, who had long been fired by the kind words of several friends with an excessive wish to meet me, must (I think) once we had met have begun to modify your high opinion and will take the first opportunity of protesting to those who had tried to sell you a small fly like myself as a great elephant; I on the other hand, who felt already a considerable desire to see you, once given the opportunity to observe you at close quarters was quite carried away by love and admiration for your great qualities and was soon making my protest to those who had given me such a niggardly picture of you.

This is not the place to tell of the historic eminence of your family and your pedigree of illustrious ancestors, of the wide extent of your territories, or of the heroic aspect of your physical presence, which bespeaks a splendid prince even from afar, although I know full well that things like these help to set off your gifts of personality. I would more gladly dwell on the qualities which are more essentially yours: the incredible charm of your character; the courtesy so readily open to all comers, which makes everything more cheerful whichever way you turn; that wonderfully supple and wholly versatile intelligence, which is always certain of itself and always ready; that exceptional judgment in affairs of every kind which, unerring in its own nature, is rendered more so by wide experience of business; that unparalleled vigour in counsel, on account of which I reckon our prince too and our court so fortunate; besides these, your uncommon propensity towards piety and sound learning, in both of which you are yourself pre-eminent; above all, your unbroken pursuit of peace, for after all those warlike prelates you have shown such incredible wisdom in ruling a people in other respects ready to rush headlong into war that they have never fallen a prey to anyone and never taken the offensive. Difficult and exceptional as it is to be a good prince, it is even more exceptional to be an upright and untainted prelate.

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7 your society] This meeting had been planned for some time; see Epp 748, 867:89–91, 198–9.

14 elephant] Cf *Adagia* I ix 69.

30 reckon … fortunate] The Hapsburg diplomacy had recently succeeded in winning the De la Marck family over from their alliance with France (cf Epp 748:29n, 956 introduction). The realignment marked the beginning of an era of peace and prosperity for the territory of Liège.

You alone fill both positions with a completeness which any other man could scarcely achieve in one alone and are no less a religious leader than you are a head of state.

But there will perhaps be a more appropriate occasion to dwell on this elsewhere, and it will be better done, I think, in other ears than yours. Meanwhile, that I may not a second time meet such a prince, who has laid me under so many obligations, empty-handed and without a gift, and that you may not think this most flourishing university of yours has nothing to offer you except spiced wine, in the last few weeks I have made ready this modest present in the literary way, a paraphrase on the two Epistles to the Corinthians, so that having Paul, the supreme interpreter of our religion, in this form, you can carry him round with you wherever you please and have him speak to you in future in clear and familiar language without a lengthy commentary. Nor do I doubt that you will gain as much profit as pleasure from what he says. For in the first place much is revealed in these two Epistles about the beginnings of the infant church, on which I am surprised to find almost nothing recorded by serious historians and such as one can safely trust. Luke alone touches on a few points relating to a few of the apostles in the course of conducting Paul as far as Rome. Dionysius, who in his second Hierarchy gives a fairly full description of the early rites of the church, is thought by the learned to be someone more recent than the celebrated member of the Areopagus who was a disciple of Paul. I have read a liturgy of the Greeks attributed by them to Chrysostom, to whom they are willing to attribute almost anything; that does not make it seem likely to me.

If only the liturgical matters which Paul touches on here and shows us

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45 university of yours] A hint at the litigation over the right of nomination to certain benefices in the diocese of Liège which continued to trouble the relations between the University of Louvain and Prince-Bishop Erard; cf Harsin *Erard de la Marck* 230–3, 248. For a comparable dispute see Ep 762 introduction.

50 without a lengthy commentary] See Ep 710 introduction.

56 Dionysius] The *Hierarchies* attributed to Dionysius, Paul's convert on the Areopagus at Athens (Acts 17:34), are Neoplatonic treatises of the early fifth century. The first explains the ranks of angels, while the second deals, as here mentioned, with the rites of the church. Before Erasmus there had been little questioning of the traditional attribution; as a result he was more than once attacked because of this statement. In the *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae* he pointed out that his view was shared by Lorenzo Valla and William Grocyn; see LB IX 916–17.

60 liturgy] A mass which Erasmus himself had translated into Latin (cf Ep 227:2n; PG 63:901–22; 64:1061–8). Erasmus' doubts about the authorship are justified.

as it were through a lattice had been handed down by him somewhat more fully and more clearly! How concise is his mention of the eucharist or synaxis, as though he were afraid of saying something that he ought not to say about that great mystery, on which certain moderns hold forth at length and issue pronouncements without pausing, as the saying goes, to wipe their feet! If only he had told us one thing at least: the persons, the time, the vestments, the rite, the wording customarily employed to consecrate the mystic bread and the cup that contains the Lord's most holy blood, from the unworthy handling of which, Paul tells us, spring frequently disease and death – words that should make us too consider with more circumspection whether this could be the source of the pox that has been spreading everywhere for some years. And it is handled unworthily, not only by the man who approaches it when polluted by lust, but much more by him who is befouled with envy hatred and malice, with scandalmongering and a passion for revenge, and other faults of the kind which by their own nature are diametrically opposed to the Christian charity which in this mystery we set forth. He speaks rather more fully of the gift of tongues, of interpretation, of prophecy, and other gifts the place of which was later taken by church music, the reading of Scripture, and preaching. For the gifts of healing and apocalyptic vision have long since left us, since charity grew cold, faith languished, and we learnt to depend on human resources rather than on the help of heaven.

He has something too to say about ecclesiastical jurisdiction, when he forbids recourse to gentile judges and gives instructions that financial disputes must be settled by Christian arbitrators. He even claims some right of judicial enquiry for himself when he says 'When I come, in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.' And again in the execution of judgment he leaves his authority as an apostle in no doubt when he delivers unto Satan the man who has associated with his father's wife, the place of which is now filled by excommunication – a weapon which in these days is to my mind used rather too readily: this terrifying thunderbolt is aimed indiscriminately and for the most frivolous reasons, and never with more energy than when some contemptible sum of money is at risk, while Paul (if I mistake not) besides Hymenaeus and Alexander delivered unto Satan one person only. Those two he condemns for their

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63 through a lattice] Cf *Adagia* III i 49.
64 eucharist] 1 Cor 11:23–31
65 saying] Cf *Adagia* I ix 54.
88 he says] 2 Cor 13:1
91 unto Satan] 1 Cor 5:1–5
96 Paul] 1 Tim 1:20, 1 Cor 5:5

obstinate opposition to the Gospel though they passed for Christians – and though we read of their condemnation, we do not read that they were ever reinstated; the other man for his open and notorious abomination. And yet even against him he did not pronounce sentence except in accordance with a unanimous vote, nor did he ever give the man's name. When condemning him, he was satisfied with denouncing his offence; in readmitting him, he does not even mention the offence, whence one can perceive it was the sin and not the sinner that was the target for his severity. Nor did being delivered unto Satan in those days mean more than being shunned for a time by everyone, so that shame might bring one to repentance. For Paul adds to his sentence 'for the affliction of the flesh, that the spirit may obtain salvation in the day of the Lord'; so that even the severity with which he cures the evil breathes the charity of the Apostle. But not long after, see with what zeal he recommends the man to the Corinthians, telling them to receive him kindly into their society after correction, for fear lest he be overwhelmed by grief too heavy for him. This penalty was at that time enough to satisfy the merciful Apostle.

Besides which, though there were many who had sinned, he preferred to take steps against one alone as a warning to the others, but with a mild penalty which should be not so much a punishment as a remedy. The rest he menaces in his letters with repeated threats, to make them repent, as though he would have no right to be severe against those who had repented of their own free will. But now look at the ferocity with which we rage against the common folk, although we have more grievous crimes on our own consciences! But at the same time the case of this man guilty of abomination, who is condemned and then received back again, makes nonsense of the doctrine of Montanus and Novatianus, who refuse to receive into Christ's flock anyone who has lapsed seriously after baptism. Not but what in the days of Augustine only a single opportunity for public penance was allowed, that the remedy might not lose its value by frequent use; though he does not deny to those who have relapsed into the same offence the hope of forgiveness in the presence of God, in his long discussion of the point in the letter to Macedonius, which now bears the number 54. The same precedent gave rise to the retributions authorized by canon law, which were once very

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111 recommends] Cf 2 Cor 2:5–11.

124 Montanus and Novatianus] Founders in the second and third centuries of sectarian movements characterized by eschatology and severe asceticism

130 letter] Augustine's Ep 153.3.7

131 very severe] The early churches required public penance and other forms of chastisement; cf *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* ed A. Vacant et al (Paris repr 1923–67) XIV-1 1136–48, 1152.

severe, as appears from the decrees of the early popes. From these again arose, it is clear, what are now commonly called indulgences, out of which I only wish it were as much our good fortune to grow rich in religion as it is certain other persons' to fill their coffers with coin. First of all, some relaxation was allowed in the regular penalties inflicted by the bishop, but sparingly, and only for weighty and religious reasons; but nowadays the remission of the torments of purgatory is openly hawked up and down, and not merely sold for money but forced upon those who do not want it, for reasons which in these days I will not mention. You remember the false apostles whom Paul knew to be a grievous plague, but none the less he lets them be for a time, for fear that severity directed against a few men may bring the general state of the church into jeopardy; for he does not dissent from Augustine's view that some men should be set right in secret and not openly, for fear of rousing them to greater madness and turning mere criminals into tyrants or leaders of heresy.

Besides which, he lays down the law as befits his apostolic office, on marriage lawful and unlawful, equal and unequal, on remarriage, and on divorce, recommending some things as being valuable and requiring others as being necessary. Of these precepts we retain some quite inflexibly enough in my opinion, not to say too much so – for example, on divorce; some have been abandoned entirely, for instance, Paul's advice that a Christian wife should continue to live with a gentile husband if he does not seek a divorce. He lays down rules also about meat sacrificed to idols, on which decisions are given in the Acts as well by James and Peter; and this perhaps has no relevance now, for no one sacrifices to demons nowadays. Though this decree too has now lost its force, inasmuch as it is not now thought an abomination to eat an animal that has been strangled or an animal's blood. But Ambrose interprets the prohibition of the blood as forbidding us to eat all living creatures that have blood in their veins and thinks for this reason that the 'things strangled' are a superfluous addition by the Greeks, because he who expressly forbids the eating of animals forbids us at the same time to eat anything strangled. But whether one should subscribe to Ambrose's opinion

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140 false apostles] Cf 2 Cor 11:13–19.

144 Augustine's view] See, for example, Sermons, attributed to him, no 268 (PL 39:2229–30).

152 Paul's advice] 1 Cor 7:13–15

154 rules ... about meat] 1 Cor 8:4–13, Acts 15:20, 29, 21:25

159 Ambrose] This startling claim is repeated in the 1518–19 edition of the New Testament, notes to Gal 2 (p 396), with a reference to [Pseudo]-Ambrose's commentary on Gal 2. Later Erasmus recognized that [Pseudo]-Ambrose did not make such a claim. Consequently he amended his note.

is for others to decide. It seems to me more like pure Christianity and more in keeping with the teaching of the Gospels and the apostles to lay down for no man any specific form of food, but to instruct all men to eat in accordance with their habit of body, whatever is most conducive to each man's good health, with a view to moderation and not self-indulgence, with thanksgiving and a lively desire to think aright.

But, to let my pen run on, the Apostle teaches us here in passing how far we ought to condescend to weaker brethren and how far to avoid any cause of stumbling: whenever, that is, there is an immediate threat to their faith and the occasion of stumbling is scarcely to be overcome, being newly identified and a survival from a former way of life, not originating in us and deliberately introduced. For whether we should agree with Augustine, who in a letter to Publicola in which he treats of various questions in this field expresses the simple view that it is better to starve to death than to eat sacrificial meat discovered by accident, if you know it to be sacrificial, I leave for others to determine; Paul finds nothing wrong in this, unless it is a cause of stumbling to the weak, and openly protests that neither idols nor meat offered to idols are anything, indignant that he should be criticized in respect of something for which he himself gives God thanks. Once that scruple has been removed, why need a Christian starve to death? For there is no similarity in the things which Augustine compares in his *De bono coniugii*, parenthood and death by starvation. Nor does Paul confuse the issue like this; on the contrary, he instructs us to refrain for the time being, since there are other sources on which you can draw in order to silence your ravening stomach. If I am allowed to steal food in order to preserve life, why am I told to die rather than arouse another man's misgivings? And all this was at that time the mere rudiments of ecclesiastical legislation, when as yet dignities and prebends, the pallium and the wearing of the pallium, and tithes predial and personal and annual dues were not yet the central questions.

Besides this, he opens to some extent the question of the property and pay of priests when he plainly lays it down as right that those who are servants of the Gospel should live of the Gospel; but his word is 'live' – nothing about growing rich and faring like a prince, and no living either unless they serve and attend constantly upon the altar. Not but what, while maintaining this right for others, he does not take it up himself, although labouring more than them all in the cause of the Gospel. Such is Paul's noble

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176 letter] Augustine's Ep 47.6
184 *De bono coniugii*] 16 (PL 40:385–6)
187 ravening stomach] Literally 'barking' – a reminiscence of Horace *Satires* 2.2.18
195 should live] 1 Cor 9:14

and truly generous spirit, and in all the centuries since then I see no one keen to emulate him. Nothing is done free; on the contrary, a price is asked for everything, and no one does it as his bounden duty and service, while the apostles used what was freely offered to them and Paul would not use even that. They collect money too, but it was the freewill offerings of those who have more than they need, and not exactions; moreover they collect for the benefit of the faithful who are in want and not to give the rich more luxury, and the terms of the collection are such that neither Paul nor Titus, who were in charge of the business, got anything whatever out of it. Hence, it is clear, it came about afterwards that many men entrusted their wealth to the church, to be expended on the needs of widows and the aged amongst others; from which the selfishness of certain people later diverted it to support their own personal rule. Representatives are sent this way and that, and they are given due honour both on arrival and on departure; but I fancy less was spent on ceremony than we see now. About the business entrusted to them I raise no questions. One can but rejoice at this great increase in the church's wealth, if religion has grown in proportion to the grandeur and the turmoil. Not that in those early times the apostles lacked their proper dignity and standing, nor did they lack resources. Paul boasts that his forces are not carnal but spiritual, owing their power not to troops clad in iron but to the protection of God, and intended not for the destruction of cities, for the plundering of common people and the slaughter of human beings, but for the overthrow of every thought that raises its head against the providence of God. The nature of those forces is explained even more clearly by Ambrose in his *De viduis*. 'It is not by the weapons of this world,' he says, 'that the church overcomes hostile powers, but by the spiritual weapons which owe their strength to God.' And a little further on, 'The church's weapon,' he says, 'is faith; her weapon is prayer, which overcomes the adversary.' This opinion finds support in Pope Nicholas, whose words are recorded in the *Sentences* book IV, distinction 37, in the paragraph beginning 'His adiiciendum.'

These were the weapons and these the forces, such was the equipment of the troops with which Paul, that invincible warrior, conquered Greece and a great part of Asia Minor and proceeded to attack and take possession of the Roman empire, which at that time was more than the weapons of any monarch could defeat. But all the territory that he subdued, he subdued for

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224 *De viduis*] 8.49 (PL 16:262–3)

228 Nicholas] Corpus iuris canonici, *Decretum*, part 2, causa 33, quaestio 2, chs 5–6, quoting Nicholas the Great, 858–67

229 *Sentences*] Of Peter Lombard: PL 192:931–2

Christ and not himself; with Christ to support him he proved himself invincible by the very fact that he depended on no support from men. He maintained the rights of the kingdom of heaven with heavenly weapons and fought the battles of the Gospel with the resources which the Gospel supplies. Tentmaker and pontiff, offscouring of the world and chosen instrument of Christ, who picked this sublime humility, this tongue-tied eloquence and stammering flow of words to spread the glory of his name through superstitious Jewry, clever Greece, and Rome, the queen of earthly kingdoms. Of him it is true, as was once said of Pericles, if I mistake not, that with thunder and lightning he confounded, not Greece alone like Pericles, but the whole round world.

There is another thing which it occurs to me to marvel at from time to time: the danger that faced the Gospel teaching at the start in its early stages, had not Paul put his best foot forward, as they say, to withstand it, much as the life of some unborn babies is in danger before they have ever come forth into life. Such a mass of weeds sprang up, which almost overwhelmed Christ's sowing while it was young and still in the blade; nor was it long before worldly philosophy and Jewish superstition, as though they had deliberately joined forces, were conspiring against Christ. Philosophy threw doubt on the resurrection and began to some extent to spoil the simplicity of the Gospel with quibbles of men's making. Judaism would have imposed on us the whole of Moses and even the crowning indignity of circumcision and would have reduced that heavenly philosophy to a matter of coarse and lifeless ritual, had not this valiant Isaac of ours opened so many wells of the authentic Gospel, so many springs of living water against the Philistines that would fill all with dirt. Philosophy at that time, led by sage fools with tongue and pen and even by tyrants with the sword, was advancing against Christ's small and innocent flock and has left traces which remain to this day. Judaism, acting through men disguised as apostles, was creeping in still more perilously under a false mask of piety and occupied Christ's whole cornfield to such an extent that even now it cannot be weeded out. Saint Augustine at any rate, in a letter to Januarius which now bears the number 119, witnesses that in Africa vessels used for washing the feet, which Juvenal also mentions, used to be kept with such superstitious respect that a graver rebuke was in store for the man who had touched the earth with his

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244 Pericles] The greatest of Athenian statesmen; Erasmus adapts the description of his oratory in Aristophanes *Acharnians* 531.

249 as they say] Cf *Adagia* III i 34, from Quintilian 12.9.18.

259 Isaac] Paul, following Isaac's example; cf Gen 24:62, 26:12–22.

267 Augustine] Ep 55.19.35

269 Juvenal] It is not clear what Erasmus had in mind.

bare foot during their octaves than for one who had drowned his wits in drink; for he was most indignant that the church of Christ, which God in his mercy willed should be free and have very few sacramental rites, should be loaded with the slavery of so many burdens that the state of the Jews might seem preferable in that, though they had not recognized their day of freedom, yet they were subjected to the burdens of the Law and not to human innovations.

Tares of this kind among the wheat he somehow tolerates, although reluctantly; what he finds quite unbearable, as openly contrary to the faith and wholly inconsistent with sound doctrine, is the way some people carry abstention from meat-eating to the length of regarding those who do eat it as unclean. Of this superstition likewise clear traces survive to our own day, for most people think that a good part of religion lies in the choice of foods, which God created of equal value that we might eat and give him thanks. Their judgment on this point is no less preposterous than the view of those Africans on the washing of feet, nearly everyone regarding it as a more serious crime to eat meat on a Saturday than to attack their brother's reputation with virulent falsehoods or even to cut a fellow-creature's throat. As Paul foretold, some were found to forbid marriage entirely. It seems to be a relic of this superstition when even St Gregory lays down as the practice of the Roman church and proper to be observed that a man who has had commerce with his own wife should abstain for some time from entering a church and should not enter until he has had a bath and, as the poet puts it, has 'washed off the night in running water'; and for this piece of superstition he produces a reason on which I will express no opinion: to wit that, though matrimony is an honourable estate, yet pleasure, without which there can be no intercourse between man and woman, cannot possibly exist without guilt. What I say will be found in the *Sentences* book IV, distinction 31, in the paragraph beginning 'Si forte aliquis.' And the defence excogitated at that point by the Master of Sentences, that we should understand this to refer to copulation provoked by incontinence, is a broken reed; the man who says 'cannot possibly' allows no room for exceptions.

There are other heresies too, the names of which have disappeared, but

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289 Paul] Cf 1 Cor 7:8–9, 25–40.

290 Gregory] Corpus iuris canonici, *Decretum*, part 2, causa 33, quaestio 4, ch 7

293 poet] Persius 2.16

298 *Sentences*] Of Peter Lombard: PL 192:921–2 (quoting Pope Gregory)

301 broken reed] Literally 'a prop of figwood,' which was proverbially weak and useless (*Adagia* I vii 85)

303 other heresies] The following names of heretical sects of early Christianity, including the Jewish sect of the Essenes and the perpetrators of the sin of

their vestiges and, so to say, the scars of them can be detected even now – those, for example, of the so-called Essenes, Ebionites, Apostolics, Psallians, or Euchites, to say nothing of the Simoniacs, a word that has long been classed as obsolete. But disputes between sects of this sort, which later set almost the whole world on fire (especially under the leadership of Arius, when things were so uncertain that it was not clear which way the world would go), multiplied even during Paul's lifetime – disputes not about indulgences or applications or other questions of the kind, which we now drag by the scruff of the neck into the substance of the faith, but about the resurrection of the dead, which is the foundation and the crown of our belief. Against this plague Paul fights with all his might, but even so I fear that this viper still lives in some men's hearts; for in Italy every year in sermons before the people they try to defend the resurrection, thinking that they will be home and dry on this question, once they can show that Aristotle did not entirely abolish the immortality of the soul. I say nothing for the moment about their conversation at table. In any case, what other men believe it is not my business to conjecture; one thing at any rate is obvious, that there are men, and particularly men in high worldly station, who live as if they have no belief whatever in a future life.

And would that here too Paul had given us somewhat more light – whether souls exist separate from the body and where they exist; whether they enjoy the glory of immortality; whether the souls of the wicked are in torment even now, whether our prayers or other good actions are of any service to them, whether an indulgence from the pope frees them all of a sudden from punishment; for I observe that many men are in doubt on these points, or at any rate dispute about them, which would have been needless had Paul left us clear definitions. Besides which, although those who are born again in Christ ought to put off the old man with his deeds and his affections, we see nevertheless that while the Gospel was still fresh, under Paul's leadership, lust, avarice, strife, ambition, discord, and other pests of

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simony, may have been chosen at random and from memory. Simoniacs apart, a connection with the problems of the church of Erasmus' own day is not immediately apparent. See, eg, Augustine *De haeresibus* 1, 40, 57 (CC 46:290, 307, 326); cf Ep 901:10n.

304 even now] Reading *hodieque,* altered by Allen in error

314 Paul fights] 1 Cor 15

315 for in Italy] Reading *quandoquidem;* the position here outlined is reminiscent of Paduan philosophers such as Pietro Pomponazzi; see E. Garin *Italian Humanism, Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance* (Oxford 1965) 136–150.

317 home and dry] Literally 'in harbour'; cf *Adagia* I i 46.

327 Indulgence] Cf the doubts raised by Luther's Ninety-five Theses, Ep 785:39n.

religion and morality had crept in among the people, while certain vices left over from their former life it had not been possible altogether to root out. Let no one therefore be surprised if in our own day some men abound in iniquity because their love has grown cold. Even in Paul's lifetime false apostles had made their way in, ready to turn the Gospel enterprise to their own profit, to divert the glory of Christ into their own personal rule, and to preach themselves rather than God; to teach the world in place of Christ and the flesh in place of the Spirit; to gloss over heavenly teaching with the teachings of men and build on Christ our foundation a structure unworthy of him. And they were made more dangerous enemies of the church because they did all this under the pretext of Christ's name and recommended by the title of apostles, whose mask they wore.

If only the church of Christ had no false apostles today! If only all those who have succeeded to the office of preaching the Gospel would follow Paul's example and preach Jesus Christ not for profit, not for advancement, not for the favour of the great, not to wreak hatred or earn favour among men, but in sincerity and truth! Paul himself when in chains boasts that the Lord's word is not chained. But now – and a sorry sight it is! – we can see men who have been virtually hired by salaries from the great for that very purpose and preach what tends not so much to Christ's glory and to true religion as towards the hunt for benefices, the setting of snares to entrap preferment, and the spreading of nets to catch bishoprics; vigorous and vocal when flattery is not only safe but profitable, and where truth would mean loss, more dumb than fish. If salt has lost its savour, what else is there with which ordinary folk that taste of nothing can be salted? If the light be turned to darkness, what can dispel the shadows of the uneducated public? If shepherds become wolves, what hope for the flock? If the leaders on the path are blind, who will call them back from a wrong turning? If men are buying and selling who ought to be the fathers of their people, where else can we look for honesty?

Has terror of men so much more power over us than the fear of God? Are we more moved by men's rewards than God's? Can it be that we first indulge our own self-love in order with more disastrous results to flatter the self-love of others? Paul does not allow any mortal man to be acclaimed, he does not suffer the praise due to the Gospel to be transferred to men. But some men nowadays, as though Christ were outmoded, introduce a new species of idolatry, making gods, if I may so put it, out of men. And all the time humble folk are misled, all the time the multitude lie under a tyranny of more than one description. This most of us can see; and we hold our peace. We not

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350 Paul] Cf Col 4:18, 1 Cor 9:12.

merely hold our peace; we help the other side. 'I admit,' we say, 'that this is right, but it is not safe.' If among Christians it is not safe to preach the Gospel unadulterated freely, where then will it be safe? Had this fear always equally prevailed, who would have passed the Gospel down to us? Perhaps the ears of princes do not take kindly to sincere advice because we have made them too familiar with smooth words.

I do not say this to find fault with anyone. Would God there were no one at whom it might be fairly aimed! I shall not give them away; but by the books they publish and the sermons they deliver they daily give themselves away, with such shameless compliance that their very apes hold them in scorn. The voice which should be dedicated to religion is the slave of gain; it ought to teach the kingdom of heaven and it is enslaved to the kingdom of the world; it should expound the mysteries of Christ and it recounts the dreams of men. The trumpet of the Gospel, which Isaiah bids sound to publish forth the glory of God, is turned into a lyre to tickle the ears of men. As for the tongue, while Isaiah boasts that he has been given the tongue of the learned to root out the nurseries of vice and plant the seeds of religion, it is adapted to a very different purpose, teaching what it ought not to teach and attacking what it ought to praise. The dog's tongue, which ought gently to lick the wounds of those who have done wrong, often attacks the reputation of the innocent and, what is more disgraceful, of those who have done it a service. We use it as a weapon with which we attack anyone who offends us or even, without offending us, has done us a service unasked. The tongue of healing, one might think, has changed into the tongue of a viper. Why can we not imitate instead a tongue like Paul's, which can utter nothing except the Lord Jesus? Why can we not bear in mind that a preacher is an angel of the Lord, from whose mouth the people expect to hear the law of God, and not abuse of fellow-members of the body of Christ; and that there is a world of difference between hierophant and sycophant, between godliness and gossip, between teaching and treachery? At this point we need the bishops to play their part; for it is their business to see that opportunity to preach to the people is not given casually to the first comer. And let us not suppose it sufficient for performing this apostolic office that a man wears a cowl. Not all who have a tongue have heart and brains.

But to speak of these questions there may be a more convenient opportunity elsewhere; let me now return to my subject. This Paul of ours is

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388 Isaiah] Isa 58:1, 50:4

408 Paul of ours] For the following comparisons see Bietenholz *History and Biography* 86–7. Vertumnus is the old Roman god of the seasons, constantly changing his shape.

always skilful and slippery, but in these two Epistles he is such a squid, such a chameleon – he plays the part of Proteus or Vertumnus to such a tune that in dealing with the Corinthians, who are more than Greeks, he seems somehow to exemplify the old proverb 'Cretan with Cretan stand,' turning himself into every shape that he may shape them anew for Christ; with such freedom does he himself twist and turn like a man who threads the windings of a maze, and appearing to us in a fresh guise every time. How humble and ingratiating he sometimes is, as he beseeches them by the mercy of Christ and begs them to bear with his foolishness for a space! Then again he cries in harsh and threatening accents 'Do ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me?' Elsewhere he abases himself and calls himself an offscouring, misbegotten and unworthy of the name of Apostle; and then becomes grand and exalted and sets himself even above the greatest of the apostles, crawling upon the ground at one moment, and the next appearing to us out of the third heaven. Now he praises the piety of the Corinthians, now thunders against their faults. Some things he demands openly; others he suggests by a kind of underground approach. Sometimes he is an unready speaker who knows nothing save Jesus, and him crucified; sometimes he speaks wisdom among them that are perfect. In one place he acts the part of an intelligent and sober man; in another he dons the mask of one who is foolish and beside himself. Now he boldly claims his own rights, now courteously resigns them. In one place he speaks from the heart, sometimes resorts to irony, with a 'Forgive me this wrong.' You may find that he gives an appearance of inconsistency; but he is most like himself when he seems unlike, and most consistent when he seems the reverse. Always Christ's business is his main concern; always he thinks of the well-being of his flock, like a true physician leaving no remedy untried which may restore his patients to perfect health.

The greatest scholars labour to explain the intentions of poets and orators; but in this orator far more toil is required if you are to understand what he has in mind, what he aims at and what he is avoiding; so full of tricks is he everywhere, if I may so express it. Such is his versatility, you would hardly think it is the same man speaking. At one time he bubbles up gently like a crystal spring, at another pours roaring down like a great torrent, carrying many things before him; now flows peacefully and gently, now spreads himself as though into a spacious lake. Again, he sometimes plunges

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412 'Cretan with Cretan stand'] The Cretans were proverbial for quarrelling amongst themselves yet standing by each other when assailed by misfortune or by other people; cf *Adagia* I i 11

419 calls himself] 1 Cor 4:13, 15:9

underground and reappears suddenly in another place; then, when it suits him, meanders unexpectedly, caressing now this bank and now that; sometimes fetches a long digression and turns back again upon himself. I am the more amazed at some people who, though they have hardly a smattering of grammar and no idea what it is to write, yet suppose an understanding of Paul's language to be an easy and almost childish thing. What I have achieved it will be for others to decide. Ambrose and Theophylact the Bulgarian bishop have been my chief guides; and though the latter is more recent, he read commentaries of the early Greek Fathers which are now lost to us. But though I have always had these two as my advisers, I have always adopted the solution that seemed closest to Paul's meaning. That I have tried to be faithful, I call Paul himself to witness.

My preface, I perceive, is longer than it should be, nor have I any excuse except that I share this fault with many other writers in our own age especially, and that my affection for you has made me run on. May your Highness be preserved for us as long as possible in health and wealth by our Prince and Master, Jesus Christ.

5 February 1519. Louvain

917 / To [Juan de la Parra] Louvain, 13 February 1519

This letter was published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Juan de la Parra was Prince Ferdinand's personal physician, who accompanied him to the Netherlands. He was bishop-elect of Almeria in 1520 and was still with his young master when Ferdinand attended the Diet of Worms (January–May 1521), but he died during the diet on c 15 May (cf *Deutsche Reichstagsakten* Jüngere Reihe, Gotha 1893– , II 911). In one of the prefaces of his *Declamationes Syllanae* (Antwerp: M. Hillen 1520) Juan Luis Vives addressed Prince Ferdinand and mentioned that his physician was to read with him daily in Erasmus' *Institutio principis christiani* (cf Epp 853 introduction, 943:26–7, 970:27–8). Like Erasmus, however, Vives failed to mention the physician's name. Apparently he was not well known in Louvain.

Prince Ferdinand (1503–64), the younger brother of Charles V, was born and raised in Spain. He had arrived in the Netherlands between 24 May and 19 June 1518 (cf Epp 846, 849). There was soon speculation as to what parts of the Hapsburg empire he should rule (cf Ep 893:39n), and at the time this letter was written Princess Margaret had recommended that he should succeed her

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451 Theophylact] Archbishop of Okhrida in the early eleventh century. His commentaries on Scripture are often quoted in Erasmus' annotations to the New Testament.

father, the emperor Maximilian (cf K. Brandi *Kaiser Karl V.* new ed, Darmstadt 1959–67, II 103–4). But after the death of Maximilian (cf Ep 915:177n) Charles was determined to secure the imperial crown for himself. In 1521 Ferdinand was appointed to rule the Austrian lands.

This letter was evidently brought about by suggestions that Erasmus himself should play an active role in the education of young Ferdinand. It shows that from the outset he was determined to decline, but to his embarrassment negotiations continued for some time; see Ep 927 introduction.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO N, PHYSICIAN AND TUTOR TO PRINCE FERDINAND, GREETING

A state owes no small debt to the fidelity and vigilance of the physician who has its ruler in his care, his body being the dwelling-place or instrument of the spirit whereby he rules. How great then is the debt this country owes to you, and not this country only; for whatever may befall, Ferdinand cannot be other than an outstanding prince, as the brother of so great a king. For you not only watch with all your medical skill to ensure that the young man enjoys good bodily health; you mould him according to a Christian philosophy and shape his mind with its sacred ideas, filling a heart that is still unspoilt and teachable with principles worthy of a true prince. Though what makes him teachable, it seems to me, is not so much his youth as the goodness of his disposition. I only wish more men were to hand like yourself, that our court might imitate the English court, which is filled with men learned in every branch of knowledge. Scholars attend the royal table; literary questions are discussed, such as concern the education of princes or in other ways promote high moral standards; in a word, the company in that court is such that you would rate any learned academy below it. May it please Almighty God to effect such a revolution in human affairs that while ambition, pleasure, and avarice have invaded our universities, the courts of princes may welcome honourable studies.

We have amongst us Luis Vives of Valencia, a man not yet past his twenty-sixth year, I think, but of much more than common learning in every branch of philosophy, and in humane studies and the arts of writing and speaking so far advanced that in this generation I know scarcely another man I would dare set against him. There is no subject on which he has not a practised pen. When he writes he reproduces in our own time the example of

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14 English court] Cf Epp 834, 855.

16 questions] For an example see Ep 964:132–6.

22 Vives] See Epp 927, 1082 introductions.

the Ancients, and that with such skill (believe me) that if you took away the author's name you would suppose the thing had arisen, not in our country and our age so much as in those fertile periods of Cicero and Seneca, when cooks and scullions commanded a somewhat better style than men do now who are ready to instruct the world. He is most scrupulous in observing the technicalities but conceals his use of them so skilfully that you would hardly think he was following a preconceived plan. It seems to me that he is the ideal person to assist you in the education of Ferdinand and to ensure that no one shall despise your court as tongue-tied and illiterate. Besides his other gifts he has perfect Spanish, as a native Spaniard, and very good French, having lived some little time in Paris. My own native tongue he understands rather than speaks. But I rather wonder whether the Cardinal de Croy, whose tutor he now is, will be willing to lose him (for he loves him, as he deserves, most cordially), and then whether it would be right to deprive a young man of great fortune and exceptional gifts of such a tutor. I am sincerely devoted to Prince Ferdinand; but I owe so much to the cardinal that I would not dare set on foot anything that might inconvenience him. Finally, I do not yet know whether Vives himself could bear to be torn from such a patron, who he knows is very fond of him. If on this point you in your wisdom feel as I do, I will suggest another name in my next letter. Farewell, honoured sir.

Louvain, 13 February 1519

918 / To Erard de la Marck Louvain, 19 February 1519

This letter was sent with a presentation copy of the *Paraphrasis in Corinthios*; see Ep 916 introduction. It was printed in the *Farrago*.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND ERARD DE LA MARCK, BISHOP OF LIÈGE, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

My Lord Bishop, I send your Highness herewith a small token of my feelings towards you, in the shape of a paraphrase on the two Epistles to the Corinthians. The work is a new departure in every way, even if it deserves no commendation for any other reason. There was a competition between the printer and myself, whether he could print off with his types every day more than I could write out with my pen. I think the work will live, whether

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31 scullions] Erasmus uses *apicius*, the name of a famous Roman gourmet (which is attached to a cook-book that survives from late Antiquity), having learnt from Tertullian *Apologeticum* 3.6 that it could be used to mean 'cook.'

40 Croy] Guillaume de Croy; cf Ep 945 introduction.

the enemies of the ancient tongues dislike it or not. You, I know, with your wonted generosity will take it in good part. The young man who brings you this volume is a good scholar and a very attractive person, secretary of the town of Antwerp, whom I love as the better half of my own soul. Give him, I beg you, a generous reception. And so farewell.

Louvain, 19 February 1519

919 / To the Reader [Louvain], 23 February 1519

This letter is a commendatory preface for an important new edition of Livy (Mainz: J. Schöffer, colophon date of November 1518, but published only after the death of Maximilian; some copies also with an appendix of critical notes by Nikolaus Carbach dated 15 March 1519). The edition was based on a newly discovered manuscript in the library of the Mainz cathedral chapter, which is now missing. It offered the text of books 33–40 with many variants and included two sections of books 33 and 40 which had formerly been unknown. Erasmus probably wrote this preface at the request of Wolfgang Angst (cf Ep 951:10), while Carbach, who had made the actual discovery and prepared the text, asked his friend Ulrich von Hutten to write a dedicatory epistle; cf Hutten *Opera* I 39* and Ep 110.

TO ALL ANTIBARBARIANS AND LOVERS OF GOOD LITERATURE FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Those who in ancient times provided scribes and parchment for the use of Origen and Jerome won credit of no common kind; think then what credit is due to those printing-houses which publish daily for our benefit such a flood of valuable books, and that too at very reasonable prices. If Ptolemy Philadelphus earned an undying name among posterity by his foundation of the library at Alexandria – a famous place indeed and well endowed but yet only one among its kind – what recompense do we not owe to those who daily offer us whole libraries, a whole world so to say of books, in every language and every branch of literature? And of that credit a great part is owing to the inventors of this almost superhuman art; among whom the chief

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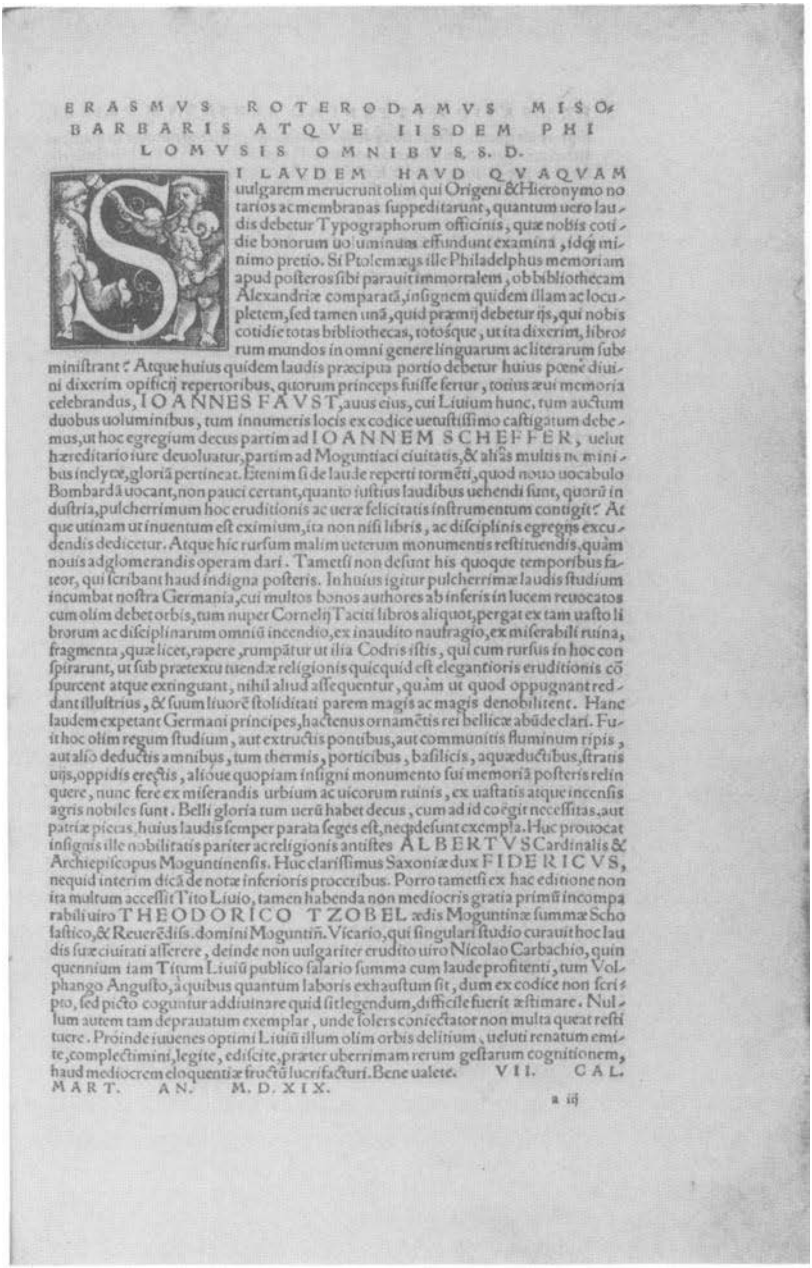
918

10 young man] Pieter Gillis (cf Epp 312 salutation, 531:585), who was in his early thirties.

919

6 Ptolemy] Ptolemy II 'Philadelphus' (308–246 BC) expanded and systematically arranged the famous library founded by his father, Ptolemy I 'Soter.'



ERASMVS ROTERODAMVS MISOBARBARIS ATQVE IISDEM PHILOMVSIS OMNIBVS, S. D.

SI LAVDEM HAVD QVAQVAM uulgarem meruerunt olim qui Origeni & Hieronymo notarios ac membranas ſuppeditarunt, quantum uero laudis debetur Typographorum officinis, quæ nobis cotidie bonorum uoluminum effundunt examina, idq; minimo pretio. Si Ptolemæus ille Philadelphus memoriam apud poſteros ſibi parauit immortalem, ob bibliothecam Alexandriæ comparatã, inſignem quidem illam ac locupletem, ſed tamen unã, quid præmij debetur ijs, qui nobis cotidie totas bibliothecas, totoſque, ut ita dixerim, librorum mundos in omni genere linguarum ac literarum ſubminiſtrant? Atque huius quidem laudis præcipua portio debetur huius pœne diuini dixerim opificij repertoribus, quorum princeps fuiſſe fertur, totius æui memoria celebrandus, IOANNES FAVST, auus eius, cui Liuium hunc, tum auctum duobus uoluminibus, tum innumeris locis ex codice uetuſtiſſimo caſtigatum debemus, ut hoc egregium decus partim ad IOANNEM SCHEFFER, uelut hæreditario iure deuoluatur, partim ad Moguntiaci ciuitatis, & aliâs multis nominibus inclytæ, gloriã pertineat. Etenim ſi de laude reperti tormẽti, quod nouo uocabulo Bombardã uocant, non pauci certant, quanto iuſtius laudibus uehendi ſunt, quorũ induſtria, pulcherrimum hoc eruditionis ac ueræ felicitatis inſtrumentum contigit? Atque utinam ut inuentum eſt eximium, ita non niſi libris, ac diſciplinis egregijs excudendis dedicetur. Atque hic rurſum malim ueterum monumentis reſtituendis, quàm nouis adglomerandis operam dari. Tametſi non deſunt his quoque temporibus fateor, qui ſcribant haud indigna poſteris. In huius igitur pulcherrimæ laudis ſtudium incumbat noſtra Germania, cui multos bonos authores ab inferis in lucem reuocatos cum olim debet orbis, tum nuper Cornelij Taciti libros aliquot, pergat ex tam uaſto librorum ac diſciplinarum omniũ incendio, ex inaudito naufragio, ex miſerabili ruina, fragmenta, quæ licet, rapere, rumpãtur ut ilia Codris iſtis, qui cum rurſus in hoc conſpirarunt, ut ſub prætextu tuendæ religionis quicquid eſt elegantioris eruditionis cõſpurcent atque extinguant, nihil aliud aſſequentur, quàm ut quod oppugnant reddant illuſtrius, & ſuum liuorẽ ſtoliditati parem magis ac magis denobilitent. Hanc laudem expetant Germani principes, hactenus ornamẽtis rei bellicæ abũde clari. Fuit hoc olim regum ſtudium, aut extructis pontibus, aut communitis fluminum ripis, aut alio deductis amnibus, tum thermis, porticibus, baſilicis, aquæductibus, ſtratis uijs, oppidis erectis, alioue quopiam inſigni monumento ſui memoriã poſteris relinquere, nunc fere ex miſerandis urbium ac uicorum ruinis, ex uaſtatis atque incenſis agris nobiles ſunt. Belli gloria tum uerũ habet decus, cum ad id coëgit neceſſitas, aut patriæ pietas, huius laudis ſemper parata ſeges eſt, neq; deſunt exempla. Huc prouocat inſignis ille nobilitatis pariter ac religionis antiſtes ALBERTVS Cardinalis & Archiepiſcopus Moguntinenſis. Huc clariſſimus Saxoniæ dux FIDERICVS, nequid interim dicã de notæ inferioris proceribus. Porro tametſi ex hac editione non ita multum acceſſit Tito Liuio, tamen habenda non mediocris gratia primũ incomparabili uiro THEODORICO TZOBEL ædis Moguntinæ ſummæ Scholaſtico, & Reuerẽdiſſ. domini Moguntiñ. Vicario, qui ſingulari ſtudio curauit hoc laudis ſuæ ciuitati aſſerere, deinde non uulgariter erudito uiro Nicolao Carbachio, quinquennium iam Titum Liuiũ publico ſalario ſumma cum laude profitenti, tum Volphango Anguſto, à quibus quantum laboris exhauſtum ſit, dum ex codice non ſcripto, ſed picto coguntur addiuinare quid ſit legendum, difficile fuerit æſtimare. Nullum autem tam deprauatum exemplar, unde ſolers coniectator non multa queat reſtituere. Proinde iuuenes optimi Liuiũ illum olim orbis delitium, ueluti renatum emite, complectimini, legite, ediſcite, præter uberrimam rerum geſtarum cognitionem, haud mediocrem eloquentiæ fructũ lucrifacturi. Bene ualete. VII. CAL. MART. AN. M.D.XIX.

a iij

T. Livius … historicus duobus libris auctus title page
The first page of Erasmus' preface
in the edition of Mainz: J. Schöffer November 1518
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was Johann Faust of immortal memory, grandfather of the man to whom we owe this Livy, not only enlarged with two new books but revised in countless passages with the aid of a manuscript of great antiquity. So that this honour in one way descends to Johann Schöffer as it were by right of inheritance, and in another is part of the glory of the city of Mainz, which has so many titles to distinction.

For if there is such competition for the honour of inventing that engine which they call by the new-fangled name of bombard, how much more justly do those men deserve honour through whose efforts this admirable instrument of scholarship and true prosperity came into being! Though, brilliant as the invention was, we may wish that its use could be confined to the printing of books and subjects that deserve it. And here again I would rather see effort devoted to restoring the great works of Antiquity instead of adding modern works to the pile; although even in our own day, I agree, there is no lack of persons whose writings will deserve the attention of posterity. So let our native Germany devote herself to the pursuit of this glorious end; the world already owes to her the recall from the shades into the light of day of many excellent authors, and most recently of several books of Cornelius Tacitus. Let her continue to rescue all the fragments she can from that vast conflagration, that unparalleled shipwreck and pitiful collapse of literature and learning, and so cause Codrus and his like to burst with spleen. Though they renew their machinations, plotting under the guise of defenders of the faith to vilify and do away all trace of enlightened scholarship, they will achieve nothing except to make their target shine more brightly and bring increasing discredit on men who are as envious as they are stupid. Here is glory to be pursued by the princes of Germany, who have hitherto won fame in plenty in the form of battle-honours. In olden days it

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13 Faust] Johann Fust (c 1400–66), a citizen of Mainz. He became the partner of Johann Gutenberg and financed the commercial use of his inventions. From 1457 he published books in partnership with Peter Schöffer, who married Fust's daughter, Christine, in 1467 and was succeeded by his son, Johann Schöffer (c 1470–c 1531); see NDB.

20 bombard] Cannon or cannon-ball. Crude weapons using as a propellant gun powder, invented in China, first appeared in Europe in the early fourteenth century and were probably developed independently in different places. National pride soon led to disputes over priority; cf J.R. Partington *A History of Greek Fire and Gunpowder* (Cambridge 1960) ch 3.

31 Tacitus] Books 1–4 of Tacitus' *Annals* were rediscovered in the abbey of Korvei in Westphalia and sent to Italy about 1508; the manuscript entered the library of Pope Leo x and was first edited by Filippo Beroaldo the Younger (Rome: S. Guilleret 1 March 1515).

33 Codrus] A personification of jealousy from Virgil *Eclogues* 7.26

was the ambition of kings to leave a name among posterity by building bridges or embanking rivers or diverting streams, or again by the erection of public baths, porticoes, basilicas, aqueducts, highways, towns, or some other such distinguished monument; now, as a rule, they owe their fame to the pitiful ruin of cities and villages and to the burning and devastation of the countryside. Glory in war is true renown for those alone who are compelled to fight by necessity or devotion to their mother-country. Fame of this kind is a crop always ready for harvest, and examples are not hard to find. In this field we have the challenge of that paragon of noble birth and godly life Albert cardinal-archbishop of Mainz, or of Frederick the famous duke of Saxony, to say nothing of princes of a lesser sort.

Furthermore, although our Livy is not much increased by this edition, we must be exceptionally grateful, in the first place, to that remarkable man Theoderich Zobel, master of the cathedral school at Mainz and vicar-general of the most reverend the archbishop, whose enthusiasm secured this additional glory for his city; secondly to that exceptionally learned scholar Nikolaus Carbach, who has now held for five years with great distinction a lectureship on Livy provided out of public funds; and, with him, to Wolfgang Angst. How much labour these men have expended – for they were compelled to guess what should be read in a manuscript that is sketched in with a brush rather than written – it is difficult to assess. But no copy is so badly corrupted that skilful divination cannot restore a great deal.

And so, my excellent young friends, now that Livy, once one of the world's favourite authors, has been virtually born anew, buy him, enjoy him, read him, and learn him by heart, and your reward will be not only a fruitful knowledge of history but also no ordinary improvement in your powers of expression. And so farewell.

25 February 1519

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53 Zobel] Theoderich Zobel von Giebelstadt, south of Würzburg, (d 6 October 1531) was a canon first in Strasbourg and subsequently in Mainz. In 1506 he became vicar-general to the archbishop and in 1518 scholaster of the cathedral chapter. He maintained friendly contacts with Hutten and other humanists and was probably personally known to Erasmus; cf Ep 880 introduction; AK II Ep 655.

56 Carbach] Nikolaus Fabri, called Carbach (c 1485–c 1534), of Karbach, Lower Franconia. From c 1512 he occupied the oldest chair of history in Germany, at Mainz, and was a friend of Hutten and Reuchlin. He frequently assisted the printer Johann Schöffer as an editor and adviser; see NDB.

58 Angst] Wolfgang Angst (cf Ep 363) was Schöffer's corrector. In September 1518 Erasmus had met him in Mainz and perhaps dined with him and with Zobel and Carbach (cf Ep 881:7). For an echo of their conversation see AK II Ep 628.

920 / To Ludovicus Carinus Louvain, 27 February 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago*.

Ludovicus Carinus (Kiel), c 1496–1569, was descended from a leading family of Lucerne. In 1513 he took possession of a canonry at Beromünster, north of Lucerne, which had been reserved for him since his childhood, and then returned to his studies at the University of Basel, where he graduated as an MA in 1514. He made friends with the Basel humanists associated with the Froben press and became acquainted with Erasmus. As a schoolteacher and tutor of wealthy students he was later to live in many places before settling down first in Strasbourg and finally in Basel. Despite his Protestant faith he was in the end reconciled with his family in Catholic Lucerne; see W. Brändli in *Innerschweizerisches Jahrbuch für Heimatkunde* 19–20 (1959–60) 45–100.

In August 1517 Erasmus had greeted Carinus in a letter to Wilhelm Nesen (Ep 630:10–11); shortly thereafter Carinus went to Paris to continue his studies under Nesen's supervision. In a reprint of the unauthorized edition (cf Ep 909 introduction) of Erasmus' *Colloquiorum formulae* (Paris: H. Estienne for K. Resch February 1519) Carinus was permitted to add on the last page a short letter to an English fellow student, dated 4 February [1519] (reprinted in Allen's introduction to Ep 920). Erasmus may be responding to this letter or to one addressed to him directly and perhaps accompanied by a copy of Estienne's publication. For some time after Carinus had arrived in Louvain to continue his studies Erasmus went on treating him as a budding scholar of great promise (see Epp 1034, 1091), but in later years their relationship seems to have ended in mutual suspicion and anger.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND LUDOVICUS CARINUS, GREETING

For the friendly sentiments in your letter, my dear Carinus, many thanks, and on its scholarship, many congratulations. Nesen had some difficulty in persuading me that it was, as they say, all home-made; but persuade me he did, partly because he is a man absolutely devoid of vanity, and partly because I have long known that you show great promise. Keep it up, dear friend; earn for yourself true happiness. The way to do this is to combine genuine scholarship and high standards of conduct. Heaven will provide the rest without your asking. Farewell.

Louvain, 27 February 1519

920

4 Nesen] Perhaps in a letter accompanying the present Ep 920. However, since Wilhelm Nesen (cf Ep 329 introduction) visited Louvain in the early months of 1519 he could have met Erasmus personally; but cf Ep 925 introduction.

921 / To Maarten Lips [Louvain, c second half of February 1519]

This letter was answered by Ep 922. The text of both letters is preserved in the two copy books which Lips kept (see Ep 750 introduction). The book sent to him is identified in his argument in the Brussels manuscript as the *Paraphrasis in Corinthios*, presumably in Martens' edition (cf Ep 916 introduction) since it came fresh from the press. Lips' reply was probably prompt and prior to Ep 934; cf Ep 922:50–1.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS TO MASTER MAARTEN LIPS OF BRUSSELS

Greetings, my dearest Maarten. I was too busy to come and see you, but that I may not seem to have forgotten you, I send you a pamphlet still warm from the press. Farewell.

922 / From Maarten Lips Louvain, [c second half of February] 1519

See Ep 921 introduction.

TO THE HONOURABLE DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, DD, FROM MAARTEN LIPS OF BRUSSELS, GREETING

I could well believe, my dear Erasmus, that you were prevented by your countless occupations from visiting a friend so humble and useless as myself. But what friend of Erasmus, however devoted, would not patiently endure to be deprived of his society, if he fairly balanced up in his own mind how fruitful, how honourable, in a word how truly Christian those avocations are which divide you from him? As for me, it is not merely my own view, it is an article of faith that you are expending not only all you have but all you are for the benefit of the Catholic church. True, many people not merely fail to see this; they actively dislike you, though your whole purpose is to deserve well of all men; and the reason for this (to say nothing of their blindness) is that they see this subject mastered by a man who is, in their view, a poet and a practised writer, but of small stature as a theologian. Heaven forbid that my own heart should accept their opinion!

You say you have sent me a pamphlet (I should call it a book) simply to show that you have not forgotten me; and this, I admit, covered me with shame. Never mind. All the same, my dear Erasmus, there is no danger of my forgetting you, who on countless points and in so many ways have led the way and followed up our friendship, which you cannot value. No, no: it is for me to say things like this; it is my business humbly to beg such things from you – I who am of no benefit to our friendship and contribute nothing to the relationship between us. But this is part of your great reputation and is rightly counted among your virtues, that, heavy as is the burden of business that weighs upon you without recompense, you acknowledge even the least among your friends, not only with your delightful letters but even with the tangible evidence of your works. Why, what more could you have done for Atensis or Dorp or Delft (to say nothing of others) than you have done for me? Besides which, you modestly call a pamphlet what I think worthy of the name of book, as though whatever you generously give your friends were a mere trifle; and you gave it me with the smell of the press still on it, as though the warmth of your affection could brook no delay.

I received protests from Edward Lee, having answered him once openly and with some force. Now I suppose we have parted, for he has not answered my letter, though up to now he has been most ready to answer. But it was rather foolish of me to hope that he and I could maintain our relationship unshaken when he could not keep the peace for a short time even with you.

But enough of that. There are a number of people, dearest Erasmus, who share my confidence and hope that you will one day think our beloved Augustine (for we call him 'ours') a worthy object for your skill as a critic. If only you were able to do that (for that you are willing I have no doubt), you would see many men, my most generous friend, who have not been brought closer to you by your restoration of Jerome (for Jerome's style is not to everyone's taste) – you would see them, I say, your devoted supporters in return for your work on Augustine, whose intelligence they admire so much. There are others who think it quite wrong that you should not have done this for so great a doctor of Holy Church, when you have shown so much respect to many gentile authors – all the more so, since on your own admission you have made a start. But the second edition of your New Testament I long for as eagerly as its most ardent admirers. This one work is the key to everything; on this, it is my belief, depends our victory, the

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922

28 Atensis ... Delft] Luminaries of the theological faculty, such as Jan Briart of Ath, the 'vice-chancellor,' and Gillis van Delft, a Paris doctor of theology who was then in Louvain. On 31 May 1519 Delft dated from the College of the Lily the preface to his *Conclusiones in sententias* (Louvain: Martens June 1519; NK 2238); cf Ep 946 introduction.

33 Lee] See Epp 765, 898A introductions.

41 Augustine] See Ep 844:275n.

41 'ours'] See Ep 899:7–8.

44 Jerome] See Ep 396 introduction.

50 second edition] Cf Epp 864 introduction, 898A:13n.

reward of so much controversy and the triumphal welcome due to all that toil.

Finally, there is one thing I would like to add at the end of my letter. On account of the friendship between you and me, which I have done so little to deserve, several of our community (but men to whose opinion in such things I attach some weight) beg and beseech me to help them in the theoretical part of their system of studies, and especially (what will surprise you still more) in the acquisition of a good style, in which they say I have had some moderate success. I am however well aware of my own shortcomings and 'how scant the gear I have at home,' and I am almost ashamed at what they say about me; I freely admit that I possess no style, though I would be most ready to meet their admirable wishes if I had the power, but they are wasting their time in asking me for something in which, for all my wish to do so, I cannot satisfy myself. Besides which, they enquire what rules or principles you gave me in the beginning. I tell them that you advised me to read Jerome and any other ancient and genuine authors; but they are not content with this and do not cease to pester me. Such poverty, such meagre resources have to be endured by the most promising talents amongst us that they do not despise the instruction even of someone like myself. How sad it is! We ought to be ashamed to boast of Augustine as the father of our Order, when in spite of that we have, I will not say no use, but extremely little use for the humanities. For every single thing a time is laid down; but for the study of good literature, just as though it had nothing to contribute, one single short hour is provided. We live in sorry times indeed.

But I must not go too far, or I shall rouse the passions of the partisans of ancient ignorance. I had these handkerchiefs ready some days ago, with no purpose except to send them to you; but I was too shy to do so, partly because I knew my small offering was of no importance and partly because I had found by experience more than once that you always respond with something more worth the having. But now that you have forestalled me with a quite uncalled-for present, I know not why I should delay any longer. Farewell and best wishes, my most generous friend and best of patrons.

In haste, from my cell in our house of Canons at St Martin's, in the year of our Lord 1519

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61 'how scant ... home'] Persius 4.52, a phrase which Erasmus himself often uses
67 Jerome] See Ep 750:5.

923 / From Ulrich von Hutten Mainz, 6 March [1519]

This letter was published in the *Farrago* together with Erasmus' answer, Ep 951.

ULRICH VON HUTTEN, KNIGHT, TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Silent though you are, I shall continue to bombard you with letters, and I shall remain devoted to you, if you despise me even. His eminence is impatient for a sight of you. The other day, on his way back from Thuringia, I had gone to meet him, and we had hardly shaken hands when he said 'Where is our friend Erasmus?' As for your book, he asked about it again and again and was surprised that I should not know what it is that you are dedicating to him. He thinks I know all your news, and I wish you would provide some basis for that opinion. He is wonderfully devoted to you; which your virtues richly deserve, but it is outside the normal practice of German princes.

So much for the prince and for your obstinate silence; now about myself. I have had more than enough of court life, having nothing in common with these gentlemen in silk and satin. I think I have secured from his eminence that wherever I am he will send my salary after me; you will think well of him for this, and it is very convenient for me. You have much encouraged him to favour the humanities by your *Annotationes*, in which you praised him for his support of me. This was a great stimulus and now, whenever he welcomes a good scholar, he expects an immediate mention from you. You may be surprised to hear that I have been very merry on the subject of court life for the whole of this year; and other little things of mine will have reached you lately. I now send you my *Febris*, which has just

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923

3 letters] Only his Ep 611 is known today; a letter from Erasmus to Hutten was now on its way; cf Ep 986.

4 eminence] Albert of Brandenburg, archbishop of Mainz; cf Ep 661.

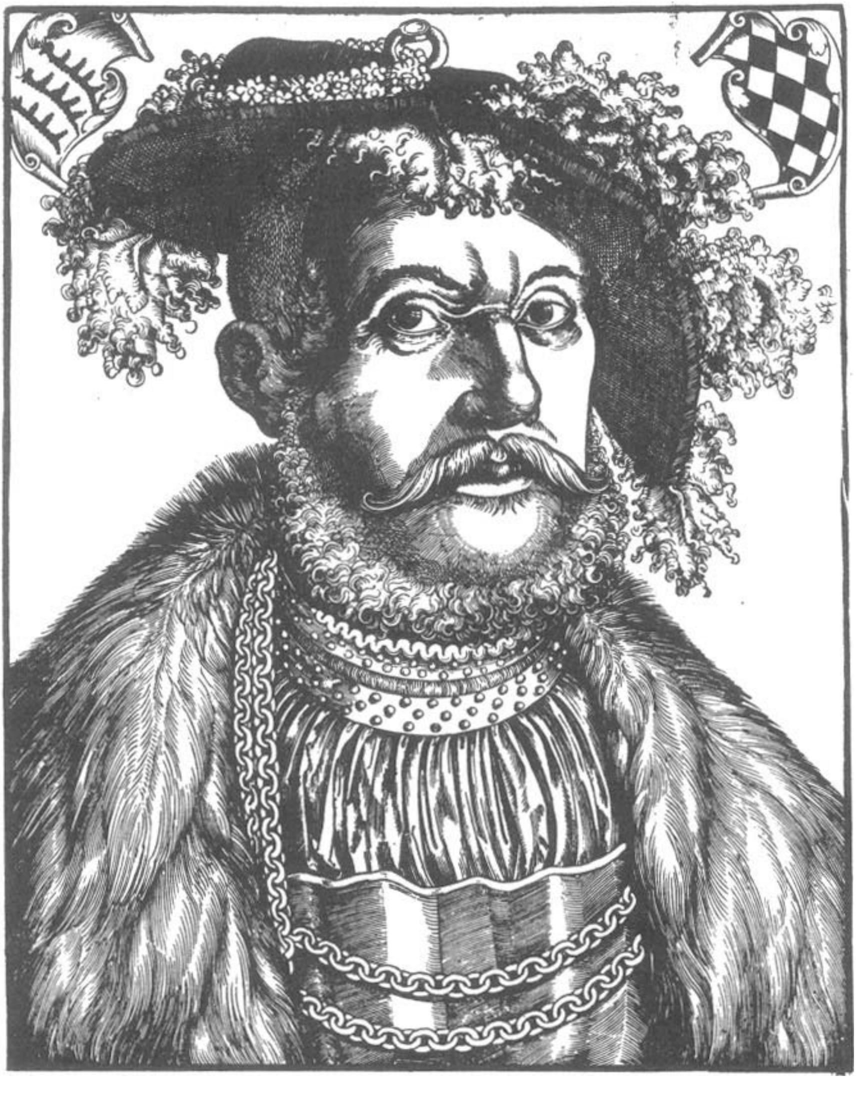
5 way back] Albert had spent the winter in his Saxon dioceses. Hutten may have met him at his castle at Steinheim near Mainz, since he did not enter the city until 17 March; cf Allen's note.

7 your book] The *Ratio verae theologiae;* cf Ep 745.

18 *Annotationes*] To the New Testament of 1516 (see Ep 611:59n). The praise of Albert was even more elaborate than that of Hutten.

22 court life] In his dialogue *Aula;* see Ep 863:36n.

23 *Febris ... Phalarismus*] *Febris, dialogus Huttenicus* ([Mainz: J. Schöffer] February 1519), later to be followed by a second dialogue, and *Phalarismus, dialogus Huttenicus* (March 1517). Both were quickly reprinted several times, for example together with *Aula* (Paris: P. Vidoue for K. Resch 1519), probably the



Ulrich, duke of Württemberg and Teck
Woodcut by Hans Brosamer (d 1552), undated
Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

appeared, and my *Phalarismus*, on which I know that you will criticize my rashness rather than praise my courage.

Meanwhile there is a great expedition preparing here, both horse and foot, in which I shall take part; so far am I from being frightened of that brigand. Before long you will see the whole of Germany in turmoil. If I am swallowed up on the field of battle (for the other side are not without resources, and they have their supporters), please ensure that posterity is at any rate aware of my devotion to you, and let your immortal writings bear witness at least to the fact that I once existed. Farewell.

From Mainz, 6 March, in haste and not read through

Reuchlin's Triumph is now published to the great confusion of the theologues.

924 / From Guillaume Budé — Paris, 6 March [1519]

This letter had not reached Erasmus by the time he wrote Ep 930 to Budé, but Ep 936 may betray a knowledge of Ep 924. Only in Ep 954 did Erasmus acknowledge with obvious relief the receipt of Epp 924 and 929, also from Budé, noting the similarity between them, which seems to preclude the possibility that both were carried by the same messenger (cf Ep 925 introduction). This letter was published in the *Farrago*.

BUDÉ TO ERASMUS, GREETING

You say you have written me a rather tiresome letter, which I have your

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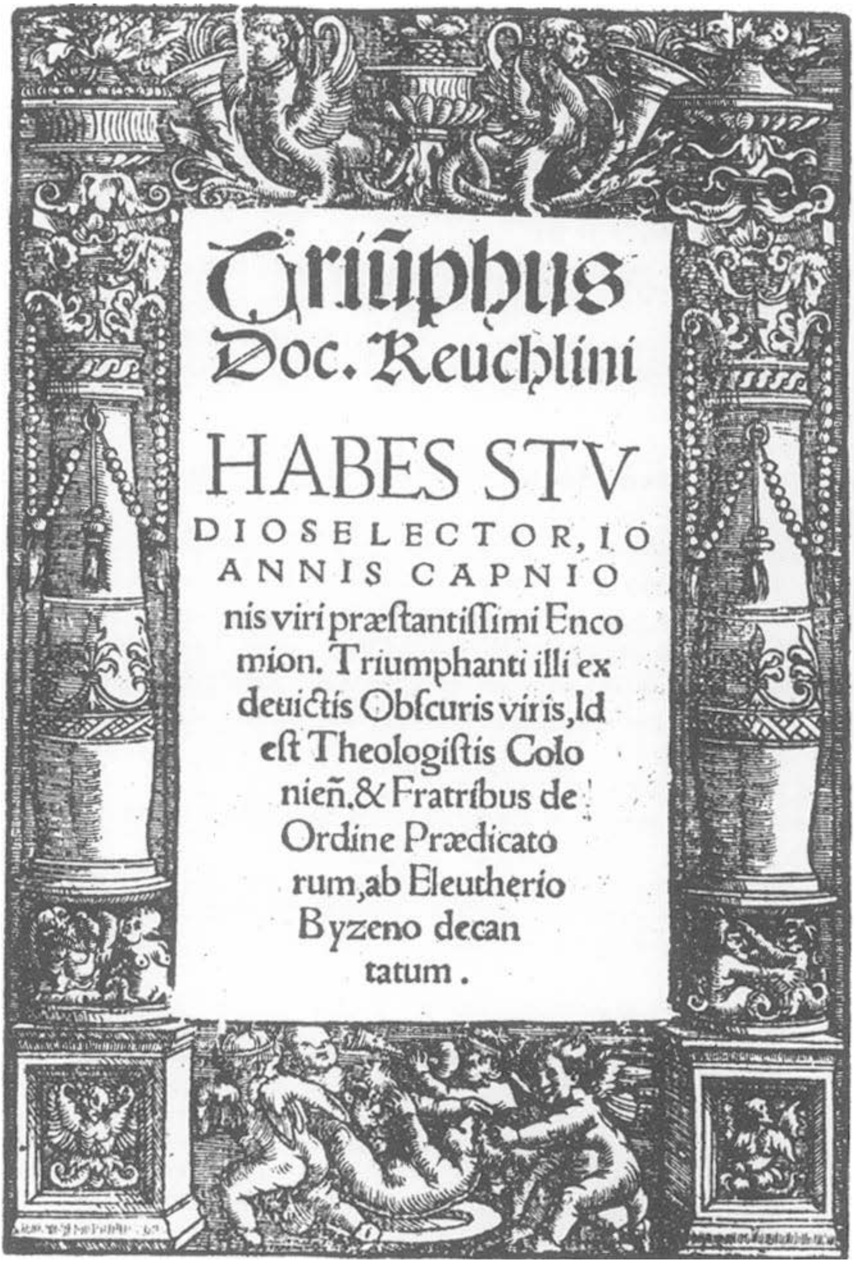
edition to which Erasmus refers in Ep 951 (see Hutten *Opera* I 16*–38*). The *Febris* was in part a personal attack on Cardinal Cajetanus (cf Ep 891:26n); the *Phalarismus*, an attack on Duke Ulrich (cf line 27n), was based on a plot reminiscent of the *Julius exclusus*.

27 that brigand] Ulrich (b 1487), duke of Württemberg (1498–1550), who had conquered the free city of Reutlingen on 28 January 1518, hoping to act with impunity because of the interregnum following the death of the emperor Maximilian two weeks earlier. The move, designed to end years of political instability, turned out to be disastrous. Under the leadership of Bavaria and Austria, the Swabian League gathered an army and expelled Ulrich from his German territories (March–April 1519) after he had failed to gain the expected support of the Swiss. Ulrich von Hutten joined the league's army as part of his family's campaign against the duke, who in 1515 had murdered Hans von Hutten, Ulrich's cousin. Hans had served Duke Ulrich faithfully, but the beauty of his wife attracted his master's attention; cf Ep 986.

34 *Reuchlin's Triumph*] For this anonymous poem, probably by Hutten, see Ep 636:29n. It was published in 1518.

924

2 tiresome letter] Ep 906; see its postscript.



Triũphus
Doc. Reuchlini

HABES STV
DIOSE LECTOR, IO
ANNIS CAPNIO
nis viri præſtantiſſimi Enco
mion. Triumphanti illi ex
deuictis Obſcuris viris, Id
eſt Theologiſtis Colo
nieñ. & Fratribus de
Ordine Prædicato
rum, ab Eleutherio
Byzeno decan
tatum.

Ulrich von Hutten *Triumphus Doc. Reuchlini* title page
Hagenau: Thomas Anshelm 1518
The Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago

permission to consign to the necessary house. On this point I shall certainly differ from you, even if as a result you are annoyed with me; I shall follow the example of Augustus, who refused to carry out Virgil's dying wishes. I suspect that when you went over your letter again, you disliked things which seemed to you rather good sense in the heat of composition. That often happens to me too. But what is one to do when one considers the state of human affairs and human actions? 'For e'en what men think wise is foolishness.' But I would have you believe that to a sympathetic person like myself these light-hearted things give pleasure, even when serious things are mingled with them; so far are they from seeming cheap. I have replied with my usual freedom; you must not expect that a man like myself, who am now nearly fifty, can be made to do better by correction.

The bishop of Paris has now been made archbishop of Sens by the royal bounty, though the business has not gone through yet. He is now absorbed by the court, and I have no opportunity to speak with him. All the same, one day when he was in his majesty's privy chamber, he told me that he had decided to write to you. He will shortly be going off towards Narbonne on a mission with the grand master of the household; and the king has instructed me to go with him too, to be a mere cypher rather than to perform any definite task in that province, or so I suppose. Still, I have been to the bishop's house twice and sat at his table; only there were so many guests that intimate conversation with him was impossible. So what he has done or decided to do, I do not know. And in any case, he has no leisure himself and does not tell me much about his intentions. As for you, I learnt on what friendly terms you are with him from the letter you sent him recently. You are thus in a

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5 dying wishes] That the manuscript of his *Aeneid* be destroyed; the story is told in the ancient life of Virgil attributed to Donatus.

9 'For … foolishness'] The source of this, if it is a quotation, has not been identified.

14 nearly fifty] He was fifty-one on 26 January; cf Ep 493:401n.

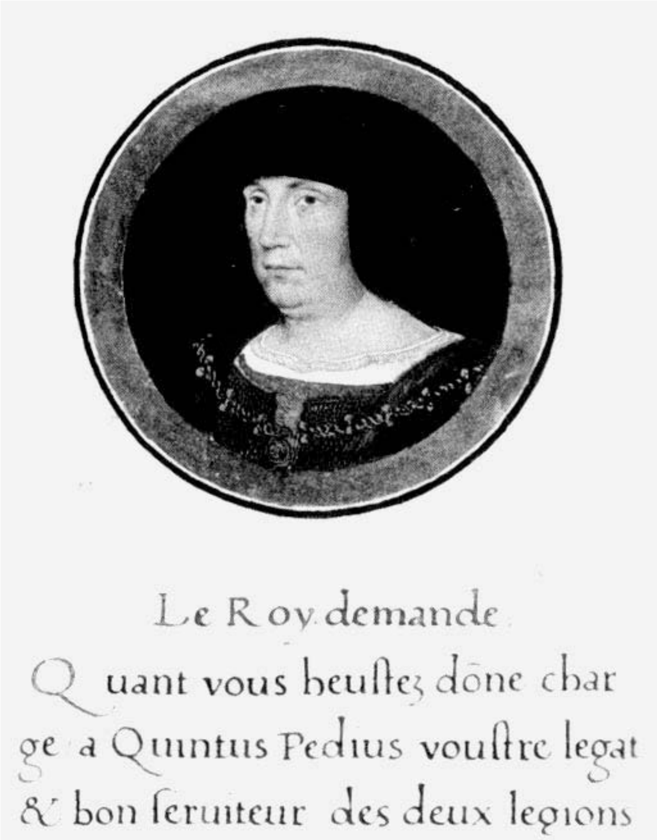
15 archbishop] Poncher's appointment is dated 14 March 1519.

19 write to you] Cf Ep 929:5n.

20 mission] Negotiations between France and the Hapsburgs, represented by Chièvres, took place at Montpellier amid heightened tension as Francis I and King Charles both pursued their candidacy for the imperial title with single-minded determination. The negotiations dealt with the outstanding provisions of the treaty of Noyon (cf Ep 532:30n) and the imperial election. Despite the good will of the participants they were bound to fail, even if they had not been terminated prematurely by the death of Artus Gouffier, seigneur de Boisy, grand master of the household, on 13 May 1519.

21 cypher] Cf *Adagia* II iii 23.

27 letter] Cf Epp 906:553n, 915:150.



Le Roy demande
Quant vous heuſtez dōne char
ge a Quintus Pedius vouſtre legat
& bon ſeruiteur des deux legions

Artus Gouffier
Miniature by Jean Clouet in volume II of
Les Commentaires de la guerre gallique, 1519
Bibliothèque Nationale MS Fr 13429 25 verso

position to sound his opinion once again. The king seems wonderfully well disposed towards encouraging and inspiring good literature. But this business of the election now occupies the whole court, so that they seem to have hardly any time for everything else. As it is, I do not know where I stand myself, and so am the less able to keep you posted about other things. I am now beginning by some stroke of fate to make a fool of myself, though I had not the least intention of doing so. But what was I to do? One must abide by the web the Fates have spun. Lord, what fools we mortals are! Adieu.

Paris, Sunday last before Lent

925 / From Nicolas Bérault Paris, 16 March [1519]

This letter was sent to Louvain with Wilhelm Nesen (cf Ep 994). Perhaps Erasmus was in Mechelen (cf Ep 927 introduction) at the time and thus unaware of Nesen's visit, which is not mentioned in Epp 928, 931 and Allen 1002:20–1. On the other hand Ep 994 rather seems to suggest that they had actually met. Perhaps Nesen carried Ep 929 too, or conceivably Ep 924. Presumably after his return from Louvain – his presence at Paris is documented in April and June – Nesen approached Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples in search of texts by Cyprian (cf BRE Ep 105), of whom Erasmus was then preparing an edition; see Ep 1000.

The year date of 1518 added in the *Opus epistolarum* of 1529 and in LB to the sequence of Epp 925, 989, 994, 1002–3 (all first published in the *Farrago*) is obviously wrong, since Poncher is archbishop of Sens in Epp 994 and 1002; for his appointment see Ep 924:15n. This letter was finally answered by Ep 1002.

Nicolas Bérault (c 1470–c 1550) taught the humanities, first in his native Orléans, where Erasmus met him in 1506, and subsequently in Paris. He was a member of Budé's circle and became royal historiographer in 1529. At this time he was preparing to accompany his patron, Poncher, to Montpellier; cf Epp 924:20n, 929:10–14.

TO THAT MOST ELOQUENT THEOLOGIAN ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM FROM NICOLAS BÉRAULT, GREETING

It has often distressed me, my dear and learned Erasmus, that two letters from me in these last two years should have been lost; for I reckon a letter lost to which you have sent no reply. Francesco Calvo had promised to take them to Basel and deliver them to you; and I would rather think him careless than

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3 two letters] Both are missing; the second may have been contemporary with Ep 819. In Ep 1002, Erasmus cannot remember exactly what Calvo gave him. For the bookseller Francesco Giulio Calvo, see Epp 581:33n, 831 introduction.

dishonest, for after only three days in his company I seemed to myself to have made a very pretty assessment of his honour and integrity. In the mean while I thought it foolish to bombard you with another letter, the more so as you were busy on more serious subjects; for you have been devoted for several years now to the renewal of the study of theology, and occupied heart and soul (so the story goes) with great expenditure of lamp-oil and of labour on the elucidation of the Pauline Epistles. That you have made a second edition of your New Covenant (as they call it) I do not doubt, especially since this is confirmed by our friend Nesen, who has also seen a full explanation by you of the Epistle to the Romans, as he reported more than once to Louis de Berquin and myself (he is a good scholar and very zealous for your reputation), when he was with me the other day in Paris. I only hope I may soon have the good fortune to see all this really well printed; I mean, of course, in Froben's types, which are the clearest and most elegant and agreeable that one can imagine. And this precisely is the hope of everyone here of more than common attainments – Budé, I mean, and Du Ruel and Ruzé and Deloynes and the bishop of Paris himself, the greatest and almost unequalled Maecenas of our times – so much so that I cannot think any other work by any author was ever awaited more eagerly.

I foresee, my dear Erasmus, yes for my own part I foresee that the object of my most fervent prayers will be fulfilled: I mean that these divinity professors of ours, who have far too long been devoted to their prickly, futile sophistries and useless logic-chopping, will abandon the party politics of Scotist, Ockhamist, yes, even Thomist, and turn back, most of them, to the historic true theology, if only you will continue to assert the true importance

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9 bombard] Perhaps an echo of Cicero *Letters to Atticus* 8.1.4

13 Pauline Epistles] See Epp 710, 916.

14 second edition] See Ep 864.

14 New Covenant] *Novum instrumentum,* the title of the first edition of the New Testament

16 explanation] Erasmus never published a proper commentary on Romans (cf Epp 710 introduction, 894:50n). Nesen may have seen the draft of some annotations at Basel in 1516.

17 Berquin] Louis de Berquin (1490–1529) was a nobleman and councillor of Francis I. He was a friend of Bérault and a great admirer of Erasmus, but increasingly of Luther too. He translated works of both into French and was finally executed as a heretic.

20 Froben's types] For the admiration Froben's books had won in Budé's circle cf Bietenholz *Basle and France* 40.

22 Du Ruel] Jean Du Ruel, royal physician and a member of Budé's circle; see Ep 346:13n.

23 bishop] Etienne Poncher

of the heavenly mysteries of Scripture. I consider you to have done this hitherto with such success that I really do not see which of the divines of ancient times anyone could rightly set above you, whether one chooses to consider and weigh up your skill in languages, your various and universal learning, or your incomparable energy and that industry which I would call almost inexhaustible. A bold claim, someone will say, and bold it is, I admit; but I believe it as true a word as ever was spoken. I know you have no lack of admirers to assail you continually with panegyrics and victory odes and pay you tributes which, even if you were to accept them, you would never ask for. For my part, I write nothing to please Erasmus; I write what I think, and nothing else. I know not how to curry favour, nor would I wish to if I could, with Erasmus above all, who is such a modest man. But how can I not hold the same opinion of you that I hear expressed by the best scholars everywhere? That man must be ignorant and mulish and a stranger to the Muses and the Graces who does not praise your gifts, your scholarship, your style, above all your religious wisdom and rule of life. On then, Erasmus, great glory of our age! Onward to compete with and surpass yourself, especially in that arena of Christian devotion and the religion of the Gospels in which you have hitherto competed against us with such glorious results that nothing remains but to excel your own self. Farewell.

Paris, 16 March [1518]

926 / From Louis Ruzé — Liège, 16 March 1519

Ep 926 is answered by Ep 928. Both were published in the *Farrago*, where the date of Ep 928 is given in a very unusual fashion as XVIII Cal. April. (15 March). The conflict with the date of this letter is best resolved by changing that of Ep 928.

After the death of the emperor Maximilian (cf Ep 915:177n) Francis I increased his diplomatic efforts to secure his election as emperor. Ruzé, a royal official in Paris and a friend of Budé's, was sent to the Estates of Liège (rather than to the prince-bishop, Erard de la Marck, who had recently broken with France; cf Epp 738 introduction, 748:29n) with proposals for political and military co-operation. But the mission failed (see Harsin *Erard de la Marck* 351–2). At the time Ruzé was writing this letter, Erard had gone to Mechelen, where he met Margaret of Austria and Prince Ferdinand, himself a candidate for the imperial throne (cf Ep 917 introduction), and leading noblemen. The political situation was bound to be discussed. Erasmus too happened to be at Mechelen (cf Epp 927:2–3, 951:12–13), but Ruzé probably did not know this (cf line 24n), and although he may have been aware of Erard's patronage of Erasmus (cf Epp 916, 918) there was apparently no immediate connection between his political overtures at Liège and his hopes of seeing Erasmus in the French capital.

LOUIS RUZÉ, SUB-PREFECT OF THE CITY, TO HIS FRIEND ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Whenever I tried, while I was in Paris, to express in writing my warm admiration for the great scholar that you are, my dear Erasmus – and I tried often enough – every time my efforts were foiled, partly by a kind of shyness, and partly by an unbroken series of labours in the public service, with the result that all my attempts came to nothing beyond a single sheet at most. If I hear that you would care to read this, such as it is, I will gladly see that it reaches you promptly, as soon as I return to Paris, on one condition however: you must take off the mask of friendship, and either it must be punished for its temerity by the critic's – that is, by your – blue pencil, or (and this I should prefer) it must fall bodily upon the sponge, so that I do not become what they call a minnow among the Tritons. I shall be sufficiently repaid, and more, if it makes you see clearly why I have kept silence so far. But at the moment, since I am on a mission for the most Christian King in Belgium, I should rightly be accused of idleness and of letting my friendships go to seed if I left this place without sending you a greeting, encouraged as I am to write by your being so near, and as I have a little more leisure for the purpose; above all because I am blessed with a messenger whose peremptory demands I neither can nor ought to refuse. I mean your – I should say, our – friend Paschasius, a young man (if my judgment has any value) of great promise, a very good scholar already in Latin and devoted to Greek; in fact, it was because of his burning passion to learn Greek that he told me he was just leaving for your part of the world and would take my letter. If only the king's business would brook a little delay with no loss of honour on my part, I

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926

6 unbroken series] An echo of Martial 1.15.7

11 blue pencil] Cf *Adagia* I v 57.

12 sponge] The emperor Augustus wrote a tragedy about Ajax, who took his life by falling on his sword; dissatisfied with his effort, Augustus rubbed it out on the slate which he used for the rough draft and said that his tragedy had fallen on its sponge; cf Suetonius *Augustus* 85.2; *Adagia* I v 58.

13 minnow] Literally 'pimpernel [a worthless bitter herb] in the salad'; *Adagia* I vii 21

16 Belgium] The Latin form here and in the heading of Ep 928 is 'apud Eburones,' which suggests the country between Liège and Aachen.

21 Paschasius] Berselius; cf Ep 674 introduction.

24 your part of the world] Evidently Louvain is intended, since he wanted to study and Erasmus is thought to be 'so near' to Liège.

would snatch up my winged boots and be off with him 'on greetings and embraces all intent.' There I should drink from your words to my heart's content all that Venus and the Graces have to offer.

As it is, I must forgo such a pleasure for the present, which I endure with the more resignation in the hope that you will soon be shedding brightness on my native Gaul like a second sun. And as its light increases every moment, wonderful to relate, you may see the very hills nod their heads and rejoice in company, while such of the darkness as yet remains gradually disappears and takes refuge so deep in the nether regions that the land far and wide will take on an aspect entirely new. A kindly and blessed mother she will be, if she sees herself bathed in the equal radiance of her two great sons; for that you are a true Gaul and one of us, you will not deny. Indeed she expects to gain from you and Budé, both brilliant lights of the ancient tongues, to say nothing of the rest, no less glory than Italy won of old from Livy and Sallust or Greece from Herodotus and Thucydides. Rise therefore, rise (I say) without delay, and at long last give the pleasure of your society to the mother-country and the friends who are devoted to you. Farewell.

From Liège, 16 March 1519

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927 / To Juan Luis Vives — Mechelen, 17 March 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago*.

Erasmus' presence at Mechelen (cf Ep 926 introduction) was connected with the efforts to find a suitable tutor for Prince Ferdinand. In Ep 917 he had suggested Vives, adding however that Vives' present employer, Cardinal Guillaume de Croy, might not wish to let him go. Erasmus' presence at Mechelen is documented until 21 March (cf Ep 931). From the present letter it may be surmised that he had gone there in the first half of March and then been sent back to Louvain to approach Vives and the cardinal. He had been given a letter for Croy but preferred not to hand it to him and thus came back to Mechelen without his answer. Perhaps the letter referred to both Vives and Erasmus as possible tutors. Thus if Croy wished to retain Vives, he would merely have had to add his voice to those who were urging Erasmus to accept; cf Epp 932:62–4, 943:22–7, 952:66–9.

Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540), the famous Spanish humanist, had come to the

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37 true Gaul] Erasmus himself had once written to Budé in such a vein (cf Ep 534:28–32), but Ruzé may be alluding to Ep 914:4–6, a letter he had recently shown to Erasmus; cf Ep 935:51–5. Like Budé, Ruzé makes it clear that the king's offer to Erasmus is still valid; cf Epp 896:92n, 932:59–61, 952:61–5, 961:8–9, 994.

Netherlands from the Collège de Montaigu in Paris, where Erasmus had lived and suffered in 1495–6. He continued his studies in Louvain, becoming the tutor of Guillaume de Croy (cf Ep 628:70n) and making the acquaintance of Erasmus. In 1519–20 he published a collection of short writings (*Opuscula varia*, Louvain: Martens; NK 2172) dedicated to Croy and frequently inspired by his familiarity with Erasmus and his works (cf Ep 957 introduction). It included a violent attack on Paris scholasticism (*In pseudo-dialecticos*; cf Ep 1108). His friendship with Erasmus was to be crowned by their collaboration on St Augustine but in the end was seriously threatened by it. In 1523 Vives went to England and was appointed to one of Wolsey's lectureships at Oxford; cf Ep 967:40n.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND LUIS VIVES, GREETING

At Prince Ferdinand's in the course of conversation the bishop of Liège complained that I had not brought a reply from his eminence the cardinal. I had some difficulty in thinking of an excuse, for I suspect that the letter never reached him. My own fault for not giving it him myself. The letter you handed to me had clearly been opened. The more opportunity I have of conversation with Prince Ferdinand, the more attractive a person I find him. If only this part of the world could be allowed a hundred years of prosperity under a prince like that! As things are, he seems likely to be banished to Germany, and their dilatory methods will cost us dear.

But we must leave this to fate. Remind his eminence, in case he wishes to reply to the bishop, who will be here I think another three or four days. Farewell.

Mechelen, St Gertrude's day 1519

928 / To Louis Ruzé — Mechelen, [c 19–25] March 1519

This is the answer to Ep 926; it was published in the *Farrago*. For the date see Ep 926 introduction.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE HONOURABLE LOUIS RUZÉ, SUB-PREFECT OF PARIS AND ENVOY OF HIS MOST CHRISTIAN MAJESTY TO THE BELGIANS, GREETING

Your letter was all the more welcome for being quite unexpected, though

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927

2 Liège] Erard de la Marck; cf Ep 926 introduction.

10 dear] The unashamed bargaining of German electors and other princes with the rival candidates for the imperial title was bound to be costly to the subjects of the house of Hapsburg; cf Ep 1009.

more than once I had eagerly wished that you would write, especially as I never receive a letter from Budé in which you are not mentioned. He is of course a most reliable witness and a most skilful and stylish artist with the pen; but even so your letter gave me a picture of you that was somehow more vivid and more lifelike. I am most grateful to you both, to Paschasius whose prompting overcame your reluctance, and to you for allowing your natural modesty to be thus over-ruled. As you hope for the favour of the Muses, mind you do not disappoint me of the sheet which you say you had intended to send me from Paris. If you write such highly finished letters on the spur of the moment and on a journey, it is easy to guess how good something must be that you have polished at leisure and at home. What you have dedicated to me in intention begins already to be mine, and I shall not cease to press you for it until I get it out of you, should you by any chance be unwilling to let me see it.

It is most kind of you to invite me to come to France. I have always been much devoted to your country, but it is the society of Deloynes and Ruzé and Budé that would attract me more than any offers from his majesty, generous though he is. But I 'while this wind blows can neither go nor stay.' I have such portentous people to deal with, that I really do hold the wolf by the ears if ever man did. Happy the state of France, and happy the cause of humane learning, to the pursuit of which you offer both opportunity and honour, under the favour, of course, of him 'whose is the power supreme'! In England also these studies flourish under the patronage of princes. Germany everywhere is rousing herself. Only in my own country are we still backward, and barbarism, defeated elsewhere, seems to have fled to us as its last refuge. The reason is partly that the court here has not yet learnt to treat good literature with respect; partly the personal pretensions of a few men, who are convinced that humane studies will interfere with the distinction they have hitherto enjoyed among the common herd. Personally I have here no axe to grind; I do not wish to make my fortune, being content with my lot

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928

9 Paschasius] Cf 926:21.

22 'while this wind ... stay'] From the lost *Philoctetes* of Aeschylus (fragment 250). In *Adagia* II v 21 (composed in 1508) Erasmus had already joined it with the proverbial phrase 'I hold the wolf by the ears' (*Adagia* I v 25), said by the man who can neither hold on nor let go.

26 'whose ... supreme'] Homer *Odyssey* 1.70

27 England] Cf Ep 917:14–21.

28 my own country] Cf Ep 930:12n.

34 no axe to grind] Cf *Adagia* I vi 82; literally 'the sowing and the reaping is none of mine,' an expression which Erasmus often finds convenient

such as it is, nor am I in the market for reputation, of which I already have enough to surfeit me. All the same, humane studies and their practitioners have my hearty good wishes, though I get nothing out of it. Not but what I think it unfair to blame the generality of men for what is caused by the ill nature of a few.

But what is this you say, my excellent Ruzé? Can I contribute distinction to that France of yours – adorned as she is already by such jewels and such stars? For besides you three she has Lefèvre and Cop and Paolo Emilio and Germain de Brie and Jean de Pins and Nicolas Bérault … The more fool I, for setting out to count the sand. Among such brilliant lights I must inevitably be overshadowed; and yet it would be a pleasure to be overshadowed like that, provided I were allowed to enjoy the society of the men who seemed to put me in the shade. That I am a Frenchman I neither affirm nor deny, born as I was in such a place that it might be considered an open question whether I am French or German. Not but what among the devotees of good literature it is right that the differences between country and country should be held of very small account. Anyone who has taken the same vows to the Muses as myself I reckon as my fellow-countryman.

From my friends' letters I gather that I am in Budé's bad books on account of a letter in which I expressed myself, for his taste, rather too freely. Personally, I judge him far too sensible to be much put out even if a friend of no importance writes something ill timed or out of order and think him too good a friend to abandon a friendship for such trivial errors. My own view is that the man who for any reasons whatever has ceased to be a friend never was one. Nor do I really see what there was in my letter so petulant or outspoken as could reasonably rouse the resentment of a scholar, a wise man, and above all a friend – and a friend who can claim the credit for his mildness and moderation while laying the blame for bad temper on me.

But I leave the letter for you to judge of; unquestionably, so far as my

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42 Cop] For the physician Guillaume Cop cf Ep 124:18n.

43 Emilio] For the historian Paolo Emilio cf Ep 136:2n.

43 Brie] For Germain de Brie, cleric, poet, and secretary to the queen, cf Epp 212:2n, 620.

43 Pins] Jean de Pins (c 1470–1537), of Toulouse, a priest who went to Italy to study the humanities and met Erasmus in Bologna. Subsequently he was councillor in the Parlement of Toulouse, ambassador in Venice and Rome, and from 1523 bishop of Rieux. He corresponded with Erasmus between 1532 and 1535.

54 letter] Ep 906; cf Ep 930.

58 ceased to be a friend] Echoed from Aristotle; cf *Adagia* II i 72. For Budé's threat to end the friendship see Epp 896, 906 salutations.

own feelings are concerned, I believe there can hardly be anyone even in France whose sentiments towards Budé are more generous than mine or whose praise of him is more outspoken. In this Henricus Glareanus will bear me out, and Wilhelm Nesen and Beatus Rhenanus, men in whose company I normally blurt out what I really think. Farewell, most excellent Ruzé.

From Mechelen, in haste. March 1519

929 / From Guillaume Budé Paris, 19 March [1519]

Cf Ep 924 introduction. This letter covers in part the same topics as Ep 924. It was published in the *Farrago*.

BUDÉ TO ERASMUS, GREETING

The day before yesterday I dined with Etienne Poncher, the new archbishop of Sens. After dinner your name came up. I took it on myself to ask whether he had written to you, and he said no, but assured me that he would be writing shortly. It is true that for these two months he has hardly had a free moment to think of you and me; partly because of public business and the king's, and partly because of his own private affairs. What he intends to write, and what he has done where you are concerned, I do not yet fully know; and I would rather you learnt the whole story from him than from me, for I do not visit him very often. Nicolas Bérault was present at our interview; he is well read in both Greek and Latin and a good friend of yours, and he is already very close to the archbishop, who will set off with him in two days' time for the province of Narbonne, and I shall be of the company, unless something happens either to me or to those who are the principal actors.

I wrote to you earlier this month to say that I do not regard your letter in the light in which you thought I should regard it, and that I had not obeyed your instructions to suppress it and did not intend to. I have suffered no inconvenience as yet from your displeasure, real or assumed. As one who makes free use of pleasantries myself, I do not easily take offence at the pleasantries of others without very good reason, and I would rather have my own feelings hurt than other people's. This is the principle I have decided to apply in the maintenance of my friendships with other men; and if with others, how much more with you, to whom, of all my friends and all distinguished persons, I would most readily yield second place, taking no

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929

5 writing shortly] It is doubtful whether Poncher did write; cf Epp 994, 1016.

10 Bérault] See Ep 925 introduction

15 wrote] Ep 924

offence at any pleasantries you might use against me nor putting a low interpretation on what might seem to be such! Nor can you think to persuade me that you were so well intentioned yourself; you had not much use for such things yourself until you experienced my own powers in that regard; wherein I may in the end of all have said much or little that seemed foolish, but nothing, I do assure you, that was ill intentioned or spiteful, I swear it by my patroness Philology or any oath you may think more sacred. If I deliberately mislead either you or any other man who may read this letter, I enter no defence if for that reason it please God to curse me. But how foolish of me! For you now begin to believe me, even though I were not on oath, unless I have convinced myself of this without reason. Farewell and best wishes. Go on as you are, doing good work in the most important fields.

Paris, 19 March

By the way 'bear and forbear' until it begins to be certain what there will be for you from us here. We hardly yet know ourselves what our intentions are. All planning is bankrupt, thanks to the emperor's death, and it is barely possible to decide anything.

930 / To Guillaume Budé — Mechelen, 21 March 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago*. It answers Ep 915 and is answered by Ep 987. Epp 930–1 were probably sent to Ruzé together with Ep 928 so that he might take them back with him to Paris.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND BUDÉ, GREETING

To your last letter, my learned friend, I shall send no reply whatever, for discussions of this kind have gone on long enough. I have no desire to display my eloquence on such a subject and have no use for victory when it is paid for by the loss of friendship. What you think of me in your own heart, I do not know. But this I would not hesitate to swear by all that is sacred, that there is no one here who has a more favourable notion of your gifts, your style, and your scholarship or speaks of them in public with more admiration than I do, although you do not attach much weight to my opinion, I well

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38 'bear and forbear'] Do nothing which might preclude the acceptance of the French offer (cf Ep 926:37n). Budé cites in Greek a famous Stoic precept, ascribed by Gellius 17.19.6 to the philosopher Epictetus; cf Ep 958:45n; *Adagia* II vii 13.

40 emperor's death] See Ep 915:177n.

930

2 last letter] Ep 915; cf Ep 924 introduction.

know, nor do you need me to advertise your worth. It is incredible how the Philistines of the whole world 'Cretan with Cretan stand' and add to their forces whatever they can pick up. This makes it all the more necessary that you and I should be of one mind. As for the letter which seems to have hurt your feelings, I will do whatever you please and am ready to cut out or water down what you do not like; or, if you prefer, I will hand it over for execution, so that it may pay the penalty as you think best. Farewell.

Mechelen, 21 March 1519

931 / To Wilhelm Nesen Mechelen, 21 March 1519

Cf Epp 925, 930 introductions. This letter was published in the *Farrago*.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND WILHELM NESEN, GREETING

I understand from my friends' letters that in your part of the world Don Agostino, the bishop of Nebbio, is vigorously declaiming against me by name, though I am not yet persuaded to believe this. If it is the truth, he and I have been employed on very different business: I praise him here as a fairminded man while he is making mischief against me in Paris. I know for an absolute certainty that the Philistines everywhere have put their heads together, meaning to leave no stone unturned that they may suppress humane studies. Take care not to put anything risky when you write to me, for letters are frequently intercepted, especially those coming from Paris, and this last letter of yours found its way back to me from Zeeland. I also hear from other people that Budé is annoyed with me about something, nor can I

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11 'Cretan with Cretan stand'] Cf Ep 916:412n.

12 can pick up] Despite many analogies in letters of other periods, Erasmus' complaint is relevant; even the astrologers agreed (cf Ep 948:19–20) that this was a time of particular trouble. He faced major personal problems in the wake of the Louvain controversies over the Collegium Trilingue (cf Epp 934; 938:5n, 946, 961:37n, 991). In turn these added new momentum to Lee's agitation, which was spreading into Germany (cf Epp 936:34n, 972). Another cause for continuing concern was the *Julius exclusus* (cf Ep 961:42n), and the news reaching Erasmus from Paris was also troublesome (cf Epp 928:53–4, 931:2–10). Eventually, however, there was a turn for the better; cf Ep 968:21n, CWE 7 preface.

13 letter] Ep 906; cf Ep 928:53–4.

931

3 Agostino] Giustiniani; cf Ep 906:529n.

7 Philistines everywhere] Cf Ep 930:12n.

9 anything risky] Cf CWE 7 appendix.

11 letter of yours] No letter from Nesen subsequent to Ep 473 is extant.

see any reason why he should be. I have no doubt that he is very highly thought of in your city, as is right and proper, but I can hardly believe there is anyone who has a more favourable notion of him or speaks of him with more respect than I do; although he is too great a man to need any advertisement from me. He had challenged me to a literary contest, and he seemed to me to take excessive delight in unlimited pleasantry; but he took offence at my last letter and answered in truly French style, to put it no higher – or rather he did not answer, for it was quite off the point. Of course I have no desire to display my eloquence on such a subject, although I cannot yet be persuaded that he is seriously indignant. He thought this offered a way of testing my good nature, or at least of letting himself go; for, take my word for it, the man who ceases to be your friend for some trivial reason never really was a friend at all. Farewell, dearest Nesen.

Mechelen, 21 March 1519

932 / From Jan Becker of Borssele Veere, 28 March 1519

This letter was answered by Ep 952 and published in the *Farrago*. For Jan's recent move to Veere see Ep 849:7n.

JAN OF BORSSELE, DEAN OF VEERE, TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

I have been longing for some time to hear – and to hear in a letter from yourself, my kindest and most learned teacher – what is your state of health and what you are putting out day by day that will contribute to raising the standard of public morality to a truly Christian level and will be a stand-by to students of Holy Scripture. Since you finished the second edition of your New Covenant, I see that you have published summaries on all the Pauline Epistles and a brilliantly clear paraphrase on Paul's two Epistles to the Corinthians. I also peruse with great pleasure and (I trust) with no less profit the enlarged edition of your system and method of theological study. But though these rightly seem to others to be very great works, as indeed they

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19 last letter] Ep 906, answered by Budé's Ep 915
22 seriously] Cf Ep 896 introduction.
24 ceases to be your friend] Cf Ep 928:58n.

932
7 second edition] Cf Ep 864.
8 published] For the following publications see Epp 894, 916.
11 system and method] The *Ratio verae theologiae*; cf Ep 745.

are, yet I know that you completed them in a few days. I know the indefatigable energy with which you work; I know you are incapable of being idle or taking time off from your literary pursuits. So I have no doubt that there are other things which you either have already written or have in hand, which will greatly assist and promote the general state of learning as a whole, and especially of sacred study.

But there is one request I wish to make of you: that when you get a little time to spare from your more serious researches, you should devote a few days to writing a book on the theory of preaching for those who wish to preach the Gospel. Long ago you laid down the principle of a Christian knight, and then of a Christian prince, besides which you have provided a theory for those who wish both to learn and to teach, in the exquisite books you have written with this subject and title. It remains for you to lay down the right principles for a preacher of the Gospel, which will in fact be a benefit to a far larger public, not only to those who have imbibed your instruction and thereafter will preach better and with better results, but also to the public who in this way will listen to preachers more effectively and with much greater profit. Such a thing will be the greatest joy to me on behalf of us all and privately for my own use. Not long ago I was enrolled, as you know, among the shepherds of the Lord's flock, and what food can I find for my Lord's flock committed to my charge more nourishing and better for them than that provided by evangelists and apostles, if only I had been trained under your guidance and knew how to feed it to them with wisdom and skill? Say yes, I beg you, for two reasons: the very great and widespread benefits that will accrue and your own passionate devotion to the religion of Christ. On promoting that religion you have spent so much energy and toil, with enormous expense and to the unquestioned prejudice of your health, despising too the hostility and open attacks of all those jealous enemies; do not refuse it this small amount of further effort. Allow some influence in this regard to my own perpetual devotion to you, ever since the day when I first knew you and admired you. If all this does not suffice to move you,

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21 preaching] The suggestion may have stayed in Erasmus' mind. Although his *Ecclesiastes sive de ratione concionandi* was not published until 1535, an outline for it existed in 1523 (cf Allen I 34:19–22). A more immediate echo can perhaps be found in Ep 967A.

23 knight] See Epp 164, 858.

23 prince] See Epp 393, 853.

24 to learn and to teach] For Erasmus' educational writings cf Epp 66, 71, 260, 298, 341, 428, 771, 909.

remember that you promised me you would do it, in the winter of last year, when I was constantly, perhaps even tiresomely, at your side.

News of my state of health you will obtain in plenty from the bearer of this letter, who met you in Basel last summer. But if I may tell you something myself, my circumstances here are somewhat easier and to all appearance more comfortable, though there is less freedom than I could wish, especially to pursue my studies; for I am at court. You know that my patroness, the Lady Anna van Borssele, died three months ago and was succeeded by her son Adolph, of whom you used to express such a high opinion. Those who know him well say much the same of him or even more. Having no ambitions, I have not yet made my way into closer knowledge and familiarity with him; nor has there been a suitable opportunity. Farewell.

Please give my greetings to our common host Master Jan de Neve, that civilized and learned man, to Master Joost of Gavere, to Jacob the physician, and my other messmates. From the town of Veere, 28 March 1519

I had almost forgotten to say that a man coming lately from Paris said he had heard the chancellor of France say that you had received an invitation from the king of France on very generous terms and would be moving there, a thing I cannot believe will really happen. Others assert that an annual salary, a fairly substantial one, is being paid you by Ferdinand, the brother of his Catholic Majesty; this I should much prefer. Farewell, great teacher to whom all lovers of the humanities and the Christian religion owe more than anyone.

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44 winter] 1517–18, when Jan was living in the College of the Lily at Louvain; cf Ep 687:18–19.
48 circumstances] Cf Ep 849:7n.
51 Anna] This former patroness of Erasmus died on 8 December 1518; cf Ep 80 introduction.
52 Adolph] Of Burgundy, heer van Veere; cf Ep 93.
56 common host] Cf Epp 717:20–1, 737:7–8.
57 Gavere] Joost Vroye of Gavere; cf Ep 717:22n.
57 Jacob] Jacob van Castere, of Hazebrouck. He taught philosophy in the College of the Lily from 1511 to 1519 and was presumably studying for a medical degree. His whereabouts after 1519 are not known; see de Vocht CTL II 82–3.
60 chancellor] Antoine Duprat (1463–1535), later archbishop of Sens and cardinal (see DBF); for the French offer cf Ep 926:37n.
63 Ferdinand] Cf Ep 917 introduction.

933 / From Martin Luther — Wittenberg, 28 March 1519

This is the first of the six surviving letters exchanged between Erasmus and Martin Luther (1483–1546), the German reformer. Before their correspondence ended in 1526, their relations had entered a new phase. In place of the basic agreement over many issues still being freely expressed in the period of this letter, the fundamental gulf between Christian humanism and the Protestant Reformation was being emphasized and analysed in the apologies which they published against one another.

This letter and Erasmus' answer (Ep 980) were published in the *Farrago*.

MARTIN LUTHER TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM. JESUS

Greeting. Often though I converse with you, and you with me, Erasmus my glory and my hope, we do not yet know one another. Is not this monstrous odd? And yet not odd at all, but a daily experience. For who is there in whose heart Erasmus does not occupy a central place, to whom Erasmus is not the teacher who holds him in thrall? I speak of those who love learning as it should be loved. For I am not sorry if among Christ's other gifts this too finds its place, that many disapprove of you; this is the test by which I commonly distinguish the gifts of God in his mercy from his gifts in anger. And so I give you joy of this, that while you are so highly approved by all men of good will, you are no less disapproved of by those who wish to secure the highest places and highest approval for themselves alone.

But what a dolt am I to approach such a man as you with unwashed hands like this – no opening words of reverence and respect, as though you were a most familiar friend, when I do not know you nor you me! But with your habitual courtesy you will put this down to strength of feeling or lack of experience; for having spent my life among scholastic philosophers, I have not even learnt enough to be able to write a letter of greeting to a learned man. Had it not been so, think of the great letters I should have plagued you with long since! Nor should I have allowed you alone to do all the talking as I sit here in my study.

933

2 Often though I converse] Luther is referring to his reading of Erasmus' works. For Erasmus' acquaintance with Luther's ideas cf below lines 22–5.

9 gifts in anger] Manifested in God's silence and withdrawal; see H. Strohl *L'Epanouissement de la pensée religieuse de Luther de 1515 à 1520* (Strasbourg 1924) 50.

13 unwashed hands] Cf *Adagia* I ix 55.

As it is, having heard from my worthy friend Fabritius Capito that my name is known to you through the slight piece I wrote about indulgences, and learning very recently from the preface to your *Enchiridion* that you have not only seen but approved the stuff I have written, I feel bound to acknowledge, even in a very barbarous letter, that wonderful spirit of yours which has so much enriched me and all of us; although I know that it can mean absolutely nothing to you if I show myself affectionate and grateful in a letter for you are quite content with the gratitude and Christian love, secret and laid up in God's keeping, that burn within my heart when I think of you, just as I too am satisfied because, though you know it not, I possess your spirit and all that you do for us in your books, without exchange of letters or converse with you in person. Yet shame and my sense of duty insist on being expressed in words, especially since my name too has begun to emerge from obscurity, for I would not have anyone think, if I keep silence, that this is due to jealousy, and of the wrong kind. And so, dear Erasmus kindest of men, if you see no objection, accept this younger brother of yours in Christ, who is at least much devoted to you and full of affection, though in his ignorance he has deserved nothing better than to bury himself in a corner and remain unknown even to the sky and sun that we all share. Which is a state I have always wished for with the liveliest emotion, as knowing well enough how curt are my resources. But by some fate or other things have turned out very differently, so that I am compelled, to my great shame, to expose my disgraceful shortcomings and my unhappy ignorance to be discussed and pulled to pieces even by the learned.

Philippus Melanchthon flourishes, except that all of us together have scarcely strength enough to stop him from hastening the ruin of his health by an insane devotion to learning. He burns with the ardour of youth both to be and to do all things for all men. You will do a good deed if you write to him and tell him to preserve himself for our benefit and for the cause of liberal studies; for so long as that man is safe and sound, I promise myself almost

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22 having heard] This letter from Wolfgang Faber Capito is lost, but his next letter to Luther (Basel, 4 September 1518) opens with the words: 'Your last letter, dear friend, I answered from Strasbourg and I also mentioned Erasmus' opinion of you, namely how sincerely and frankly he admires your Theses on indulgences' (Luther w *Briefwechsel* 1 Ep 91; cf above Ep 785:39n). Capito continued his efforts to promote friendship between Erasmus and Luther with Ep 938.

24 preface] See Ep 858:216n.

49 all men] 1 Cor 9:22

50 tell him] Erasmus did so in the postscript of Ep 947.

more than I dare hope for. Greetings from Andreas Karlstadt, who is wholly devoted to Christ as he sees him in you. The Lord Jesus preserve you, most worthy Erasmus, for ever and ever. Amen.

I have written at length. But you will bear in mind that it is not always the scholarly letters that deserve to be read; sometimes you must be weak with those that are weak.

Wittenberg, 28 March 1519
Brother Martin Luther

934 / To Maarten Lips Louvain, 30 March 1519

This letter was published in the *Epistolae ad diversos*. In the Brussels manuscript (cf Ep 750 introduction) Lips added to it an argument which identifies the book mentioned in line 2 and ironically congratulates Latomus (see line 4n) on his achievement in writing the pamphlet that accompanied this letter.

Latomus' pamphlet appeared amid mounting conflict between the theologians and the humanists of Louvain, in which Erasmus was soon personally involved. When he returned from Basel in September 1518 the Collegium Trilingue (cf Ep 691 introduction) had introduced regular courses in all three languages, and his relations with leading theologians remained at first polite, if not cordial (cf Ep 867:274–5). But the latent hostilities surfaced when Petrus Mosellanus' (cf Ep 911 introduction) inaugural lecture at Leipzig, *Oratio de variarum linguarum cognitione paranda* (Leipzig: V. Schumann August 1518), began to circulate in Louvain. It contended that a sound knowledge of classical languages was indispensable even for theologians, in much the same way that Erasmus had done in his recently published *Ratio verae theologiae* (cf Ep 745 introduction). It was this contention which Latomus attacked in his two dialogues *De trium linguarum et studii theologici ratione* (Antwerp: M. Hillen 1519; NK 1326). The pamphlet was apparently rushed to the printer. It exhibited conflicting tendencies which could have left a reader with the impression that additional authors might be hiding behind Latomus' name. In February 1519 Erasmus had been publicly criticized in Louvain for views expressed in another recent book of his (see Ep 946 introduction); and in early March Alaard of Amsterdam (see Ep 676 introduction) had been prevented from giving a course of lectures on Erasmus' *Ratio* under the auspices of the Collegium Trilingue. With some justification Erasmus thought that Latomus was attacking him as well as Mosellanus, who was easily identified as a speaker in the dialogue (cf

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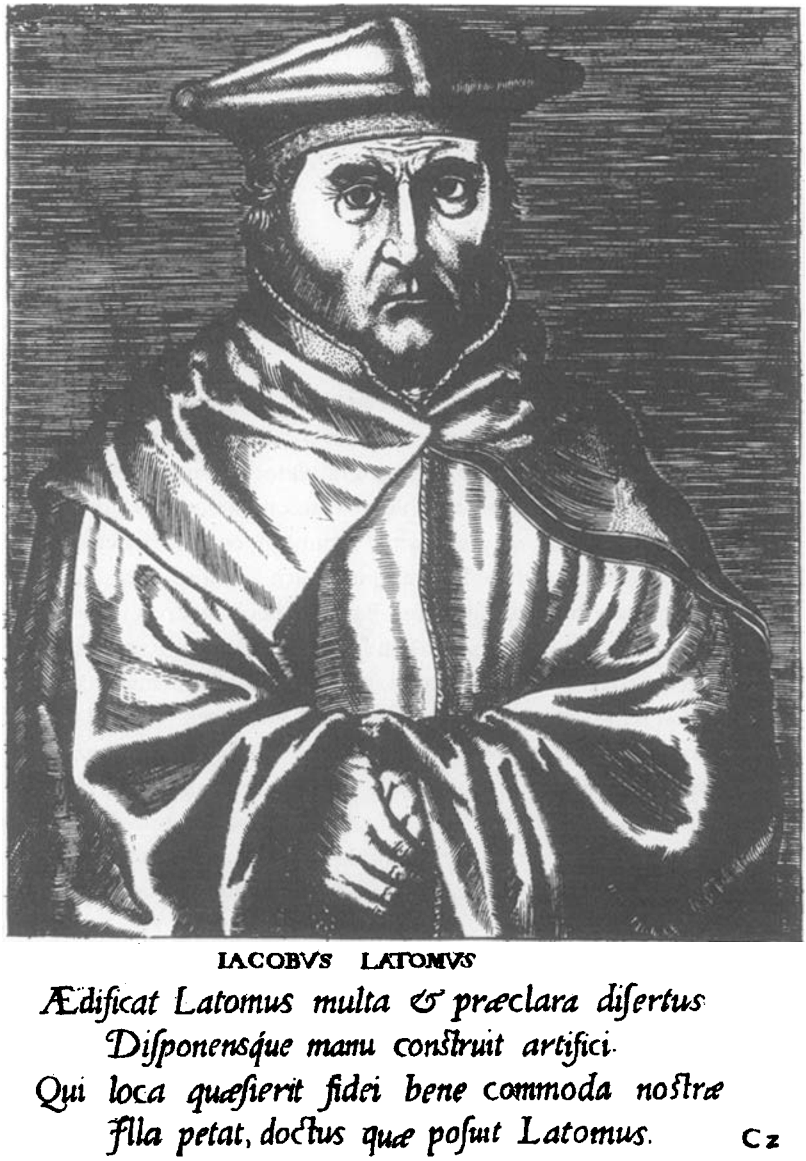
52 Karlstadt] See Ep 911:61n.
57 are weak] 1 Cor 9:22



IACOBVS LATOMVS

Ædificat Latomus multa & præclara diſertus
Diſponensque manu conſtruit artifici.
Qui loca quæſierit fidei bene commoda noſtræ
Illa petat, doctus quæ poſuit Latomus.

C 2

Jacobus Latomus (Jacques Masson)
Engraved portrait by Philip Galle in *Illustrium … scriptorum icones*
Antwerp: T. Galle 1608
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Ep 936:39–65, 970:14–15). Rejoinders were inevitable. On 21 March, when Erasmus was at Mechelen (cf Ep 927 introduction), Matthaeus Adrianus answered in public on behalf of the Collegium Trilingue, and in July 1519 Wilhelm Nesen continued the dispute by publishing a vitriolic *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium* (cf CWE 7 appendix). Erasmus' own contribution was an *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* (Antwerp: J. Thibault, n d; NK 2850; and, with corrections, Basel: J. Froben May 1519; cf LB IX 79–106). He took issue merely with those who saw in Latomus' dialogues an attack upon himself, and his courtesy and moderation helped to bring about a gradual détente; cf Ep 968:21n; de Vocht CTL I 298–346.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO MAARTEN OF BRUSSELS, GREETING

As soon as the book reaches me, you shall have a copy. None the less, what you sent enclosed in your letter shall be kept safe for your own use. I send a pamphlet by Jacobus Latomus, a scholarly and elegant performance which many people suspect to be not his own unaided work but put together by the theologians in conclave, and aimed at me. My own view is that it is good enough for Latomus but not good enough to look as though it had been passed by a majority vote of the theologians; nor do I deserve, I think, to be the target for such things. Other questions when we meet; I am summoned suddenly to Antwerp but shall return shortly. Farewell, dearest Maarten.

Louvain, 30 March 1519

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934

2 book] The second edition of the New Testament (cf Ep 922:50–1). It appears that enclosed in Lips' letter was a sum of money to pay for his copy, but that Erasmus intended to give it to him as a present; cf Ep 955.

4 Latomus] Jacques Masson called Latomus (d 1544), of Cambron near Mons. He studied at the Collège de Montaigu in Paris and was already an MA in 1502 when he became the head of a residence for poor students in Louvain. He took his theological doctorate on 16 August 1519 and for the major part of his life continued to teach theology in Louvain, later becoming an outspoken defender of orthodoxy and critic of Erasmus; cf de Vocht CTL I 324–7.

4 scholarly] Lips noted on the margin of the Brussels manuscript: 'ironically.'

10 Antwerp] The dates of Epp 936, 939 seem to indicate that Erasmus was in Antwerp on 2 and 14 April, whether continually is not clear. In Ep 952:12–13 he spoke of a purely recreational visit, but Lips suggested (cf Ep 955 introduction) one connected with the publication of his *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* (see introduction.) The printing is so careless, however, that Erasmus could not have supervised it personally; see de Vocht CTL I 344.

935 / To Christophe de Longueil Louvain, 1 April 1519

This letter presents Erasmus' carefully measured reaction to Ep 914 but curiously was not published at the same time. It did not appear in print until the *Epistolae ad diversos* of August 1521.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO CHRISTOPHE DE LONGUEIL, GREETING

Your letter gave me pleasure for many reasons, dear Longueil, my learned friend – a letter written not to me but about me; and specially because it revived my long-standing impression of your natural gifts and the hope of something more than common in the way of style which I had formed some years ago from the festival oration you pronounced when you were quite a young man in honour, if I remember right, of Saint Louis, king of France. Your letter was shown to me by Ruzé, the sub-prefect of the city of Paris, a good scholar himself and a most generous judge of scholarship in others. So far am I from resenting your preference for Budé as against me that I think you were almost too chary of his praises and too lavish with mine. In your fairminded way you paid him a very high tribute; but whenever I contemplate his almost more than human gifts, I think I see something more there than eloquence can express. Of me on the other hand you speak more highly than I can either accept or expect; for me it is glory and triumph enough to be compared with a man who is in all respects incomparable. You could not in my humble opinion do more for the fame of Erasmus than by making him second indeed to Budé, but second by a short head. But I read Budé's praises with greater pleasure than my own, partly because I am more jealous for his reputation than for that of any man alive, partly because whatever he possesses in the way of honour I reckon to be also mine, not only by that general principle of the Pythagoreans that friends have all things in common, but also under the terms of a private agreement between us, formally signed, sealed, and delivered long ago, so that no one can deny it.

You paint me a pretty picture of myself, but I doubt whether it is altogether in my true colours. And yet in front of this portrait I rather fancy myself; not that I believe it at all, but because it is a pleasure to be done by the

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935

6 festival oration] *Oratio de laudibus divi Ludovici* (Paris: H. Estienne, n d). It was delivered at Poitiers in 1510 and published with a preface dated from Poitiers, 5 September 1510.

8 shown to me] The expression could suggest a personal meeting following the exchange of Epp 926, 928.

22 in common] Cf *Adagia* I i 1; cf Phillips 1–13.

26 true colours] Cf *Adagia* I iv 6.

hand of an Apelles. What is more, when you point out the shortcomings found in me by the critics I get no less profit than I do pleasure, though I could somehow wriggle out of some of them did I not set so high a value on your judgment. When you say that I am too kind to my own faults, believe me, this is not so much kindness as either ignorance or more probably idleness. I am like that; I cannot conquer nature. I really do not so much write everything as let it pour out, and the work of revision is more troublesome than composition. In the choice of words, it is true, I should be sorry to seem altogether careless; but I do not think it proper for one who seeks to convince on serious subjects to be careful and meticulous in adopting an ornate style. Nor will anyone wonder that the river of my style should sometimes run turbid and muddy who remembers the authors through whom it has to flow, mean as they are and debased in language, so that it must inevitably pick up some dirt from them. It happened not seldom even to those great leaders of the art of writing that from their familiarity with Greek texts they often spoke Greek unawares. One point should perhaps be attributed to the copyist, where you allow me an excessive flow of language, a gift which is particularly Budé's. For a bare and straightforward style suits an uncomplicated nature, nor is it odd that a man's writing should be on a lower plane who is lower in every way, in body, mind, and estate. Moreover the frequent and excessive digressions ascribed by the critics to us both alike (and the critics are a mask, if I mistake not, under which you have chosen to present your own opinion) each of us had complained of already in letters to the other.

Above all however I wonder how it occurred to you to wonder that Francis king of France should have 'preferred a German not a Frenchman, a foreigner not a native citizen, a stranger not a man he had long known.' The king preferred neither of us but was keen to unite us in any way he could. No

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28 Apelles] The most famous painter of ancient Greece

31 you say] Ep 914:55

39 authors] A hint at Erasmus' 'night watches' devoted to the New Testament. The evangelists and apostles neither possessed nor needed the accomplishments of rhetorical style; cf Ep 844:63–108.

44 allow me] Ep 914:61–2

50 letters] Cf Epp 493 and 531, an exchange which seems to suggest the approach taken in Longueil's letter.

53 'preferred ... known'] Ep 914:6–8, 95–8. The statement may have expressed openly what some of Budé's friends thought in secret and was bound to be received with sympathy among the Paris humanists. But Budé himself, although perhaps jealous of Erasmus' international reputation, had always worked loyally to bring him to Paris, and some of his friends had written to Erasmus with the same sincere intent.

one would have had to give place had I moved to France, so untrue is it that I should have stood in Budé's way. When you say that you and I were born under the same government, in the same country, speaking the same language, I am happy not so much for my own sake as for that whole region, which I rejoice to see daily grow in honour from such distinctions, which are genuine and lasting. Nothing in fact more hoped-for could happen to me than that many men should arise like you, not merely to take over from me in this race we run for fame, but properly to overtake me and to throw into the shade by their own brilliance the little reputation that my work has earned me. Yet posterity, I feel, will recognize, and will confess it owes me something for it, that in an unpromising age, and in a part of the world where liberal studies had been quite extinct and were resented, I have fought a long and unpopular fight against the most obstinate opponents of the humanities. But whatever view may be taken of me in the days to come, I rejoice that at the moment the best subjects are coming into flower everywhere to good effect. Farewell, Longueil, my learned friend; devote yourself unsparingly to these studies, as you have already begun to do, and may success attend you.

Louvain, 1 April 1519

936 / To John Fisher Antwerp, 2 April 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago*. For Erasmus' presence in Antwerp see Ep 934:10n.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN, LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

It is a long time since I enjoyed anything more than your Lordship's letter. Repeatedly I raised to my lips that well known and friendly hand. You increased my delight by not only writing but writing a long letter; for kind your letters always are. You accuse me of prolonged silence, but I do not deserve this. However busy I may have been, I have interrupted you with a letter from time to time; but I think that some things one starts on their way never arrive. The book in which you maintain against Lefèvre that there was never more than one Magdalen I have only dipped into; but of those who

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57 When you say] Ep 914:101–2

936

3 letter] Perhaps a reply to Erasmus' letter mentioned in Ep 908:27–8

9 book] *De unica Magdalena libri tres* (Paris: J. Bade 22 February 1519), the first of Fisher's three interventions in the steadily widening discussion on the Magdalens (cf Epp 766:26n, 1030). Fisher took issue with Lefèvre d'Etaples,

have read it everyone thinks you have easily the best of it. Only, some of them are sorry to see you sometimes treating rather harshly (as they think) an old man and a good man like Lefèvre, who has also done well by these subjects; nothing could give more satisfaction to those who like to see nothing added to the traditional disciplines in which they were brought up. On this score Lefèvre has a bad name with them too. But it is almost bound to happen that in discussions of this sort which involve a clash of views, one's pen may sometimes get out of hand unintentionally. I certainly sometimes find that when I suppose myself to have written nothing but pure endearments, there are people all the same who think I have shown my teeth. However that may be, I envy Lefèvre such an opponent, by whom he may be laid absolutely low, but he will have the consolation that 'tis great Aeneas' hand that fells him. But the scum with which I have to contend! And the malignant libels! They cannot earn honour for themselves anyhow else by doing good, so they hunt for a little notoriety by befouling other men's good name.

Etienne Poncher, the bishop of Paris, who encouraged you to write that book, is now archbishop of Sens, which I hope will mean as sure happiness for him as it will mean sure profit for the Holy See. He is now being sent on a mission to Spain, at his age, and (so God love me) I am seriously anxious for his health. He was a man who should be preserved as long as possible for the public good, for his wise counsel would be a blessing to king and kingdom.

The man of whom you write will never be other than himself; in fact at

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who had rejected the traditional view that several passages in the New Testament all referred to one woman, Mary Magdalen. Erasmus later claimed that he was accused of being the author of Fisher's book; cf Ep 967:168–71.

23 Aeneas' hand] Virgil *Aeneid* 10.830

27 Poncher] Fisher states at the beginning of books 1 and 2 of his *De unica Magdalena* that the work was undertaken at Poncher's specific request; see J. Fisher *Opera omnia* (Würzburg 1697; reprint 1967) 1395, 1425. Poncher's interest in the matter is understandable, since it divided the scholars of Paris. When Josse Clichtove intervened in support of Lefèvre, he too addressed his preface to Poncher; cf *Disceptationis de Magdalena defensio* (Paris: H. Estienne 19 April 1519). Poncher could have asked Fisher to examine the question during his embassies to England late in 1517 (cf Ep 744:40n) and in September 1518; cf Ep 964:39n. The news concerning Poncher may have been derived from Ep 924.

29 profit for the Holy See] Such as the fee for conferring the pallium and perhaps the annates

34 The man] Edward Lee, likewise in line 99 (cf Epp 908:27n, 1026, Allen Ep 1061:434–8). Erasmus was clearly in no mood for the mediation attempted by Fisher (cf lines 99–106). Rather Lee was attacked afresh in Erasmus' *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* (cf Ep 934 introduction; LB IX 106A). There Erasmus

this moment he is exceptionally active in this purveying of slanders for which he seems to me to have a natural gift; and yet he seems to himself to have a touch of sanctity. If I had on my conscience even the least portion of his malignant libels, I would not dare approach Christ's table.

There has appeared a dialogue by Jacobus Latomus, a theologian at Louvain, in which he does not entirely condemn the study of the ancient languages, but so handles them as to reduce their importance as far as he can. He then opposes different principles to my *System of Study*, but for the time being without mentioning names; though in this way he puts me in a more invidious position, for the strictures that he passes on this man or that, and specially his strictures on Luther, may be supposed by the uninstructed reader to be meant for me. This kind of restraint without restriction is a new invention of our theologians. I myself certainly liked the book on many counts, and I only wish they would write until they have had enough, and stop scandalmongering. As it is, I am falsely accused by many people in such a roundabout way that I have no one against whom I can draw my sword with any certainty. I had entirely decided not to answer his pamphlet, but my friends' opinion won the day; though my answer is such that it might be thought no answer at all. I had said in my *System* that a good part of theology is to have a pious mind and the right spirit. Latomus rejects this, showing at some length that to be a theologian and a pious man is not the same thing. But I fear that, if this goes farther, there will be people later on who say that it is not the same thing to be a theologian and a man of sense. I perceive clearly that the plague is deadly and almost believe the astrologers who not only ascribe to the influence of the heavenly bodies the physical ills from which

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repeated the charge made here, added more insults, and promised to identify his critic as soon as he would make his charges in public. Lee, of course, realized that the anonymous attack was directed against him and prepared to answer the challenge. More than once Erasmus tried unconvincingly to deny, not that Lee was meant, but that the readers had reason to believe that he was (cf Allen Ep 993:34–8; *Apologia invectivis Lei* in *Opuscula* 268–9). Finally there was an equally transparent and even cruder attack on Lee in Nesen's *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium;* see *Opuscula* 219, 229, 269; cf CWE 7 appendix.

39 dialogue] See Ep 934 introduction.

42 *System*] The *Ratio verae theologiae*

44 strictures … on Luther] Cf Ep 938:5n.

48 they would write] Written charges can be answered; verbal innuendo cannot; cf above lines 34–7 and Allen Ep 1053:388–400, 429–40.

53 I had said] Literally in the last sentence of the revised *Ratio verae theologiae* (cf Ep 745; LB V 138), but the formulation merely repeated one of Erasmus' fundamental views.

men now suffer everywhere but also think they give rise to plagues of the mind. But O the madness of it! We waste our own valuable time and other men's leisure on malignant falsehoods of this kind, and in our own eyes we are saintly, we are theologians, we are Christians! And where all this time is the Christian's tranquillity, his simplicity of mind, his blissful holiday in the fields of Scripture?

What penalty can I pray for that is bad enough for those evil tongues who have tried to persuade you that Erasmus does not approve of you? I do not reckon you among those of whom I ought to approve, but for whom I ought to feel entire respect and veneration – and you more than any other, for I have always regarded you as my special teacher and unflagging benefactor. If you are seldom mentioned in my letters, the reason is only my respect for your high position; for there are so many ways in which your greatness comes upon me – your eminence as a bishop, your admirable brand of learning, but above all the saintly life in which you recall to our generation, as few others do, the famous bishops of Antiquity. Towards others I allow myself more freedom; but you I have always thought should never be named by me without due thought, especially in a published book. And yet I have dared to mention you in some other places, and especially in the last edition of my *Enchiridion*, in which I have added a fragment of Basil translated by me some time ago. But for the time being I look round for some work which I can suppose likely to endure and which must seem not unworthy of your eminence and your personal authority; and this shall be dedicated to you, by which I mean that your name shall recommend it to the world.

As to the proceedings in your part of the world for the reform, as the story goes, of the clergy, I fear your reformers may be following too closely the example of the physicians, who first reduce to a shadow the patient they have undertaken to cure. O that Christ would at long last arise and liberate his people from tyrants of so many kinds! For the end seems likely to be, unless steps are taken, that it would be more tolerable to live under the tyranny of the Turks.

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60 plagues of the mind] Cf Ep 930:10–12, and for Erasmus' half-hearted belief in astrology cf Epp 755:32n, 948:19–28.

67 does not approve] Cf Ep 1068.

77 named] Many past letters to Fisher were not published by Erasmus. His name was even omitted in the heading when they were copied into the Deventer Letter-book; see Epp 653, 889 introductions.

79 fragment of Basil] *Basilii in Esaiam commentariolus* (cf Ep 229), printed in the recent edition of the *Enchiridion;* cf Ep 858.

85 reform] Cf Ep 967:29–31.

But to return to your book: I wish it had been more elegantly printed. If there is anything I can do in this respect, you will not find me unwilling. I could wish also that your pains had been devoted to some other subject; though this too has both piety and elegance. But those short notes by which you establish the succession and significance of the Gospels, of which I had a taste some time ago much to my liking, would in my judgment have added something more worth having to your reputation.

As I was about to seal up this letter, the man I mentioned just now, transformed, I suppose, by the magic of a letter from you, sent an envoy to me in Antwerp to treat of the re-establishment of friendship between us. I replied that if he could re-establish the damage he had done to my reputation, I should be most ready to return to our previous relationship. In the spirit of a Christian, I have no wish to injure any man, even when injured myself; but I am not so easily swayed that I can put my trust all at once in a man whose nature I know from experience to be like that. In fact he never was a friend whose friendship ended as his did. On Luther I will write at more length another day. My very best wishes to your Lordship, to whom I tender my respectful devotion.

Antwerp, 2 April 1519

937 / From Richard Pace — Richmond, 5 April [1519]

The date must be 1519 because of the *Paraphrasis in Corinthios*. This letter was answered by Ep 962; both were published in the *Farrago*.

RICHARD PACE TO HIS FRIEND ERASMUS, GREETING

I could do nothing for Pieter the One-eyed, whom you recommended to me in your last letter, because the king has never thought of having a fair copy made of the book you mention. I have read the copy of that tragi-comic story which you sent to our friend More, and what you say about the case is quite right: men of that sort are being swept away by a kind of fatal insanity, so

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92 your book] See line 9n. In keeping with Erasmus' offer here, a sequel to *De unica Magdalena* was in fact published at Louvain; see Ep 1030.

95 notes] Cf Ep 667:4n.

99 just now] See line 34n.

937

2 Pieter] Meghen (cf Epp 231:5n, 653 introduction). Erasmus had apparently recommended him in a missing letter subsequent to Ep 887.

4 the book] Possibly the manuscript mentioned again in Ep 964:132–41

4 story] Probably the appeal for support against Lee mentioned at the end of Ep 908

fatal that in my view only the shears of Fate can cut it short. Even if some sovereign remedy were at hand, and the physician at their bedside urging and begging them to take care of their own health, they are reluctant to spew up the poison they have swallowed. If you listen to me, you will continue on your admirable course and earn the gratitude not only of sound learning but of the whole church of Christ; let those men and their incurable insanity go to perdition.

I have read your paraphrase on the two Epistles to the Corinthians with the greatest care and wish to say that from this labour of yours I have gained so much that at long last (for such a thing never happened to me before) I dare affirm that up to a point (not to rate my own wits too highly) I understand both what St Paul says and what he means. At last that divine spirit in Paul, which used to seem stilted and intermittent, has its full force. At last those divine precepts, which before tasted to me of bitter aloes, are turned to honey. As it is, your paraphrase has made all so clear to me that I shall bid farewell to all the commentaries by modern interpreters of the Apostle, seeing how in so many places they have merely spread darkness over an author who had enough obscurity and to spare of his own already. There is another point of which I strongly approve: you have pitched your style low enough so that the enemies of good writing cannot possibly accuse you of affected language, but have to recognize the simple utterance proper to the church, whose smooth flow exerts a powerful charm over the reader and holds his attention however long he reads. As a result, for all the simplicity of the style, to my taste no element of eloquence is wanting. Were Paul himself alive today, what could he do except prefer his new self to his old?

Keep it up then, my dear Erasmus, I do beg you, and explain the other Pauline Epistles too in the same way. It is a task fully worthy of your genius, your learning, and not least your cloth, and the completion of it will win you great glory not only among men but in the eyes of God himself. I for my part am impelled to urge you to do so by the fact that the reading of what I have seen was so enjoyable and so profitable as to make me wait eagerly for what is yet to come.

This reminds me of something you said in another letter, that you had resolved to spend your declining years in England and thought of coming over next summer. It is a great joy to me to know that you are planning this. A

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12 to perdition] Pace uses the Greek expression 'to the crows,' *Adagia* II i 96.

14 paraphrase] See Ep 916.

40 another letter] Perhaps Pace's recollection of Ep 887:10–14 or a missing letter resuming the same argument; cf Ep 886 introduction.

very warm welcome will await you from us all; only have a care of your health above all in taking such a step – 'think twice ere for Abydos you set sail.' Meantime you may be sure that the king's good will towards you increases daily and that he is continually singing your praises; he has men round him too who do not forget you.

Farewell. From Richmond, 5 April

938 / From Wolfgang Faber Capito [Basel], 8 April 1519

This text comes from a collection of Capito's letters in the possession of his grandson, Dr Wolfgang Meyer zum Hirzen (1577–1653), published by A. Scultetus in his *Annalium Evangelii ... renovati decas prima* (Heidelberg 1618) 45. The date was recorded by Scultetus in his introduction. The letter illustrates Capito's efforts to bring about contacts between Erasmus and Luther (cf Ep 933:22n). It also forecasts the future disagreement between Capito and Erasmus, since they evidently differed sharply in their advice to Froben as to whether or not he should continue to publish Luther's writings; see lines 1–2, Ep 904:20n.

Do not, I beg you, exaggerate this business of Martin into a public issue. You know how much your vote matters. I really mean this. It is important that Luther's reputation should not suffer. This will encourage the rest of the younger generation to risk something in the cause of liberty in Christ; though there is much in him I do not like. Do not let Louvain prove an obstacle. We will maintain Germany and Saxony in a proper respect for you, where the prince is a powerful supporter of Luther and so is the flourishing university of Wittenberg, and there are so many persons of distinction who wish equally well to both Erasmus and Luther. There is nothing his enemies wish more than to see you indignant with him. He himself and his party are

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44 Abydos] Cf *Adagia* I vii 93.

46 men round him] Among them More and Pace himself. His letter is dated from Richmond, south-west of London, where the court was at this time; see LP III 76, 165, 197.

938

5 Louvain] In Ep 936:44–6 and especially at the end of his *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* (see Ep 934 introduction; LB IX 106) Erasmus expressed concern that some of Latomus' general criticisms, perhaps intended for Luther and Hutten, might be taken to refer to himself. On 22 February 1519 the Louvain faculty of theology had written to their colleagues in Cologne questioning the orthodoxy of certain statements made by Luther and asking for their opinion; cf Ep 930:12n, CWE 7 preface.

7 supporter] Cf Ep 939:48n.

devoted to you. Better make enemies of all the theologians than of his supporters; they include several princes, cardinals, bishops, and all the leading churchmen, who have the business much at heart.

939 / To the Elector Frederick of Saxony Antwerp, 14 April 1519

The original letter, autograph throughout, is in Thüringisches Landeshauptarchiv Weimar, MS Reg. N 156 ff 2–6; cf Ep 979 introduction. It was printed in a pamphlet containing the questions which Eck and Karlstadt were to dispute at Leipzig (cf Ep 948 introduction, *Contenta in hoc libello, Erasmi Roterodami epistola* ... [Leipzig: M. Lotter c May 1519], and again in *Tomus primus omnium operum ... Lutheri* (Wittenberg 1545), together with the elector's answer, Ep 963 (cf Benzing *Lutherbibliographie* nos. 356–7). It may be noted that Erasmus never published Epp 939 and 963, although the exchange with Luther, Epp 933 and 980, appeared in his collected correspondence. He may have felt that this letter recommended Luther more warmly than was compatible with the reserved position he was attempting to maintain in public. By contrast Frederick's secretary, Spalatinus, used Erasmus' letter to strengthen his master's support for Luther and also sent a manuscript copy to Wittenberg, which Melanchthon (on 21 May; cf *Werke* VII-1 Ep 22) and Luther (on 22 May; cf W *Briefwechsel* I Ep 179) acknowledged with understandable satisfaction. They gave it to Mosellanus and Lotter for printing, and on 30 July Martin Bucer had seen a copy at Heidelberg. Noting that the letter was dated from Antwerp (cf Ep 934:10n), he thought that Erasmus had turned his back on the scheming theologians of Louvain (BRE Ep 119). Cf Höss *Spalatin* 161–2.

Greetings and all good wishes, most illustrious Prince. Although it has never been my good fortune to see or to speak with your serene Highness face to face, a fact which I count not the least among my misfortunes, I took fire from the remarkable unanimity with which everyone extols your distinguished gifts, worthy even of the highest rank, and the wonderful spirit in which you encourage good literature and have even shown very special favour to myself, and made bold to dedicate to you my revision of the *Lives of the Caesars*, seeking nothing from your Highness in return, and with no ulterior motive except to deepen your approval of liberal studies and give some indication of a kind of mutual esteem answering in me to the favour so great a prince has freely bestowed upon me.

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939

5 highest rank] The imperial crown is intended; cf Ep 1030.

7 *Lives of the Caesars*] By Suetonius; see Epp 586, 947:43–5.

If, moreover, I did not send you the volume from Basel, where the work was printed, the reason was the length of the journey (for at that time you were in Wittenberg) and the lack of any reliable person to whom it might safely be entrusted; and soon it came to seem superfluous to send you a book which was in circulation everywhere. I chose however to send this letter in the meantime as it were to spy out the land, to discover thereby whether my labours were welcome or no. If my boldness was ill timed, I will take care to remedy my mistake on another occasion. Nor do I doubt that, with the singular mildness of disposition of which all men speak, you will easily pardon the fault of one whose spirit at least is zealous and well meaning. Good judgment may have been lacking, but there was no lack of the desire to earn your Highness' gratitude.

If on the other hand my boldness has met with success, I ask no reward for my service except that your Highness should continue your patronage of those more liberal studies which are now coming into flower everywhere even in this Germany of ours and add a reputation in this field also to your other glories. Who knows if this will not bring at least as much credit to our country and to our princes personally as they have reaped hitherto from glory in war? This felicity will be ours if the liberality of princes will encourage those who profess humane studies and the younger men whose gifts hold out no ordinary promise, and if their authority were to be our defence against those enemies of the Muses who obstinately assert the tyranny of ancient ignorance with every weapon they can command. Is there anything that these devoted adversaries of liberal subjects do not attempt? Any tricks and calumnies and deceits they do not invent? Any saps and mines they do not use as they creep up on us? How they advance their artillery, how they rain missiles on us steeped in deadly poison! O the conspiring, O the tight-knit plots among them for the destruction of humane letters! They did not learn these in their youth and are too proud to learn them in old age, though they could acquire them with less effort than they put into attacking them. What unity they show in this field, these men who never agree except when they are bent on mischief! How clever they are now, who would be blockheads for any better purpose! How they keep watch, who would be half asleep in a good cause!

There have recently appeared some pieces by Martin Luther, and at the same time rumour has reached us that he is persecuted beyond all reason by

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12 not send] For a similar omission cf Ep 835. For Frederick's acknowledgments of the dedication cf Ep 963:5–8.

46 some pieces] See Ep 904:20n.

the authority of his eminence the cardinal of San Sisto, who is now as papal legate in Swabia. What instant rejoicing at this, what triumphant glee, as they think they see a perfect opportunity offered them to do harm to the humanities! For, as the Greek proverb has it, rascals have all they need save opportunity, which gives scope for wrongdoing to those who have an ever-present desire to do wrong. Immediately the pulpits, the lectures and committees, and the dinner-tables were loud with nothing but cries of Heresy! and Anti-Christ! And in with this business, charged as it is with prejudice, especially among foolish women and the ignorant multitude, these cunning fellows mix allusions to the ancient tongues and good writing and humane culture, as though Luther trusted to these for his defence, or these were the sources whence heresies were born. This worse than libellous effrontery did not find favour with men of principle but none the less was hailed as a pretty invention by some persons who suppose themselves the standard-bearers of theology and pillars of the Christian religion. See how in the blindness of enthusiasm we pander to our own faults! We count it a monstrous calumny, almost as gross an offence as heresy, if anyone calls a brawling theologian, of whom we have not a few, not a theologian but a vain talker; and we forgive ourselves if before a large audience we use words like heretic and Anti-Christ of anyone who rouses our disapproval.

I know as little of Luther as I do of any man, so that I cannot be suspected of bias towards a friend. His works it is not for me to defend or criticize, as hitherto I have not read them except in snatches. His life, at least, is highly spoken of by all who know him; and not only is this very far above all suggestion of greed or ambition, but his integrity wins approval even among the gentiles. How unsuitable to the mildness proper to a divine when instantly, and without even reading his book right through, they break out with such ferocity against the character and reputation of an excellent man, and do so moreover in front of the ignorant multitude, who are quite without judgment! All the more so, seeing that he put forward points for discussion and submitted himself for criticism by everyone qualified and unqualified. No one has given him advice or corrected him or proved him wrong; they

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48 San Sisto] Cajetanus (cf Ep 877:12n). After much hesitation, Frederick wrote to the papal legate on 8 December 1518 rejecting his request that Luther be sent to Rome or at least expelled from Saxony. It was a crucial step; see Höss *Spalatin* 141–2; Boehmer *Luther* 245–9.

51 Greek proverb] Cf *Adagia* II i 68.

66 vain talker] Erasmus uses a Greek term from Titus 1:10; cf Ep 911:8n.

69 know as little] Cf Epp 961:37–8, 967:86–7, 980:19, Allen Epp 993:45–7, 1033:39, 1143.

merely cry heresy, and with disorderly uproar encourage people to start throwing stones. One would think they thirsted for human blood rather than for the salvation of souls. The more the word heresy is repugnant to Christian ears, the less should men be permitted to attach it wantonly to anyone. All error is not heresy without more ado, nor does something instantly become heretical if this man or that disapproves of it. They do not always advance the cause of the faith who attach grand labels of this kind; many of them, in fact, are advancing their own cause, with an eye to their own advantage or their own despotic rule. Indeed, a headstrong passion for causing mischief often leads men to attack in others what they equally approve at home.

Finally, there being so many authors ancient and modern, and none of them having yet been discovered in whose books they do not agree that there are dangerous errors, why do we read the remainder in silence with our minds at rest and let fly so ferociously against one or two? If we uphold the cause of truth, why are we not aroused equally whenever something is found that is contrary to the truth? To defend the purity of religion and the faith is a most pious thing; but it is a most pernicious thing under pretext of defending the faith to serve one's own appetites. If they wish anything that is accepted in the universities to be regarded as an oracle, why do universities disagree among themselves? Why do our professors continually do battle one with another? If it comes to that, why does one theologian differ from another inside the very walls of the Sorbonne? On the contrary, you will find very few who agree, unless they are in some conspiracy. Besides which, they are not seldom detected condemning in the books of modern scholars what they do not condemn in Augustine or Gerson, as though truth altered between one authority and another. The authors they approve of they read in a spirit that is ready to twist everything and stick at nothing; those they do not like, in a spirit that will find fault everywhere.

The best part of Christianity is a life worthy of Christ. If this is forthcoming, the suspicion of heresy ought not to arise too easily. As it is, some men I could name are inventing new foundations (so they call them) –

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100 in the universities] Cf Ep 938:5n.

103 Sorbonne] Cf Ep 936:27n.

105 of modern scholars] The reference is evidently to Luther. The controversial views of Augustine on justification and of Jean Charlier de Gerson (1363–1429) on Conciliarism had been invoked to a degree in his early Latin writings (cf Ep 1033). On both counts he had been sharply criticized by Cardinal Cajetanus; see Boehmer *Luther* 236.

in other words they lay down new laws under which they can declare anything heretical which they do not like. Whoever accuses another man of heresy ought himself to display a character worthy of a Christian – charity in correction, mildness in finding fault, a fair and open mind in passing judgment, and no haste in coming to a decision. As none of us is free from error, why are we so merciless in pursuing other men's faults? Why would we rather conquer than cure, why rather suppress a man than put him right? Why, he who alone of all men was wholly free from error did not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. Augustine, dealing with the Donatists, who were worse than heretics, does not wish to apply force alone without instruction and tries to protect from the sword of justice the necks of men whose daggers were drawn to smite him every day. We who have teaching as our special duty prefer to use force because it takes less trouble.

I write this to you very freely, most illustrious Duke, because Luther's case has very little to do with me. Be that as it may, it is your Highness' privilege to protect the Christian faith by your personal religion; and it is no less your business as a wise ruler not to allow any innocent man, while you are the source of justice, to be delivered under the pretext of religion into the hands of the irreligious. This is no less the policy of Pope Leo, who has nothing more at heart than the protection of the innocent. He rejoices in the name of father and has no love for those who under his shadow exercise despotic rule; nor does anyone more fully carry out the pope's wishes than he who dispenses perfect justice. What is thought of Luther in your part of the world, I do not know; here, at any rate, I perceive that his books are read eagerly by all men of judgment, though I have not yet had leisure to read them through. My best wishes to your Highness, and may Christ the Almighty long preserve you for our benefit in health, wealth, and happiness.

From Antwerp, 14 April, in the year of our Lord 1519
Your Highness' most devoted servant Erasmus

To the most illustrious prince, Frederick, duke of Saxony, elector of the Holy Empire, etc

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121 flax] Cf Isa 42:3, quoted in Matt 12:20

121 Augustine] For Erasmus' reactions to Augustine's views on heresy and tolerance cf Ep 858:268n; Wallace K. Ferguson 'The attitude of Erasmus toward toleration' in his *Renaissance Studies* 2nd ed (New York 1970); P.G. Bietenholz in *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 34 (1972) 35–7.

940 / To Jacobus Theodorici of Hoorn Louvain, 17 April 1519

Epp 940–2 are addressed to residents of Erfurt and were published in the *Farrago.*

Jacobus Theodorici (Jacob Dierckx) of Hoorn matriculated at Erfurt in 1500. He was rector of the university for the winter term 1519–20, doctor and professor of theology in 1520, and dean of the theological faculty in 1523; see E. Kleineidam *Universitas Studii Erffordensis* (Leipzig 1964–80) II 310 and passim.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND JACOBUS OF HOORN, GREETING

I welcome your kindness most warmly, for this reason among others, that you take the lead in making overtures of friendship, though in addition the fact that we come from the same country and share a love for similar studies would have no small weight with me. You say that you think you once saw me at Deventer, but from this fact if no other you will easily perceive that you are the victim of a delusion: when I left Deventer, the bridge over the river that flows past the town was not yet built. Nor did I go to England when I left Deventer, for it is only nineteen years since I first set eyes on Britain. I left Deventer when I was fourteen, and I am now in my fifty-third year. The problem which you discussed has not yet been demonstrated by anybody. Farewell, dear Jacobus.

Louvain, 17 April 1519

941 / To Euricius Cordus Louvain, 17 April 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago;* cf Ep 940 introduction. Euricius Cordus was the name taken by Heinrich Ritze Solden (1484–1535) of Simtshausen near Marburg. He obtained an MA at Erfurt in 1516 and became the head of the school at St Mary's and a lecturer in the faculty of arts. In 1519 he took up the study of medicine to improve his income, just as his fellow-poet and friend Eobanus (cf Ep 874) would do a few years later. In 1534 he was town physician and a teacher in Lutheran Bremen (see NDB). The original of this

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8 bridge] Across the Ijssel. The accounts of the building contractor are preserved and run from 15 June 1482 to 1487, but the bridge was open to traffic from early March 1483. Thus it appears that Erasmus believed he had turned fourteen (line 11) on 28 October not later than 1482; cf A.C.F. Koch *The Year of Erasmus' Birth* (Utrecht 1969) 31–6.

10 nineteen] Close to twenty, in fact; cf Ep 103 introduction.

letter was probably signed 'Erasmus Roterdamus ex animo tuus'; its arrival prompted Cordus to compose an ecstatic poem; cf Ep 1008 introduction; Allen IV xxix; Krause *Eobanus* I 103.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO EURICIUS CORDUS, HEADMASTER, GREETING

I only wish it were as easy to reply to all one's friends by answering their letters as it is by returning their affection: I would not then allow myself to appear second to anyone in the performance of my duty. As it is, being by myself and at the mercy of so many people, I have to give up one or the other, all the more so since, besides the exchange of correspondence which takes up no small share of my time, I am burdened in addition with such a load of learned work – not to claim any credit on the side for the labour that is devoted to refuting the malicious inventions of my critics. Whether I have gained any men for Christ, as you suggest in your letter, I do not know, although many express gratitude to me on this account; certainly I have done what I could, and I wish that I might have gained Christ for myself in the process. Over and over again I bless the good fortune of our country of Germany as I see her daily warming to the influence of humane studies and putting off the spirit of her native forests.

You say you are opening a school in Erfurt. I pray for a blessing on your enterprise. The university is already famous on many counts, and your labours will add to its lustre. To make you more zealous in the duties of your office, never forget that after princes and bishops no one can possibly perform more distinguished service to the community than a schoolmaster, if he can instil into minds that are still unformed and ready to take any shape a spirit worthy of Christ and those studies that have appealed to the best men in every age. If you take my advice, you will devote more effort to the encouragement of humane studies than to the refutation of their enemies. In the light of day the monsters of the dark disappear of their own accord. Be sure to give my greetings to Eobanus, the Ovid of our times, but a pure and godly Ovid. Farewell, most cordial Cordus.

Louvain, 17 April 1519

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941

3 easy] Erasmus expressed anxiety about the volume of his correspondence in Epp 944:28–32, 948:241–6, 951:2–3; 952:16–18.

10 critics] Cf Ep 930:12n.

27 Ovid of our times] Cf Ep 871:16n.

942 / To Johannes Draconites Louvain, 18 April 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago*; cf Ep 940 introduction, and for Draconites see Ep 871.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOHANNES DRACO, GREETING

In setting out to sing my praises, you ask pardon for your style and reject any suggestion that you flatter me. For my part, I was delighted with the ease of your writing, which is both clear and natural, particularly for a young man; and from this I promise myself that you will develop a style of rare distinction. Apart from that, I see no reason why anybody should either be jealous of me or try to flatter me. What advantage could be gained by any such adulation? It may be that praise of this kind, which I owe to some people's partiality or readiness to think the best of others, gives me a heavy load of jealousy to bear; and yet the affection which gives rise to it is something I cannot entirely refuse. I only wish there might be some truth in what you say about the benefits which the Christian world has derived from what I write. Who am I that I should be able to do the world any great service? Though I have tried to lay out my talent, small as it is, so as to make a profit for my Lord. Success may have failed me, but my good will has never failed. Some people protest, with undue spite; others praise me beyond reason. I do not deserve the virulent attacks of the one party, nor do I accept the panegyrics of the other. Till further notice, I measure myself by my own standards; I am not inflated by the enthusiastic praise of my supporters, nor am I at all cast down by the perversity of my detractors, consoling myself for the time being by a clear conscience and looking to receive the reward of my unsleeping labours from Christ, if men are not as grateful as they might be. Though I perceive that all good men welcome my efforts; but bad men are in the majority.

Speaking in the name of Erfurt University, you assure me of their enthusiastic support at present and promise it for the future. The approval of so famous an institution was extremely welcome to me; for they would not show me such friendship unless they approved of me. I only hope that Eobanus does not regret his journey here as much as I rejoice in my own

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942
14 talent] Cf Matt 25:14–30.
16 with undue spite] Cf Ep 930:12n.
18 measure myself] cf *Adagia* I vi 89.
29 journey] See Ep 870 introduction.

good fortune in getting to know such a good scholar, such an excellent writer, and a man of such integrity and high character. Though I myself gave him a rather uncivil reception, being at the time excessively busy – not that I am otherwise than busy ever. Farewell, my dear Draco.

Louvain, 18 April 1519

943 / To Johannes Thurzo Louvain, 20 April 1519

This letter answers Ep 850 and in turn is answered by Ep 1047. It was published in the *Farrago*. Two contemporary manuscript copies survive and were used by Allen in establishing his text; one is in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Clm 965 pp 349–53, which is also the source for Ep 850; the other is in the Library of the University of Bremen, MS a 8 no 5.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST JOHANNES THURZO, LORD BISHOP OF WROCŁAW

Greeting. Your letter, my Lord Bishop, was full of kindness no less than of scholarship and eloquence and polished grace, and I should have thought it richly deserved to be published to the credit of your reputation, if it did not rate my own reputation much too high. Its brilliance very nearly deterred me from replying, but I thought it better to lose face than to seem ungracious. And I should be very ungracious indeed if, in response to such a letter from so eminent a prelate, I had simply kept silence. So far am I however from thinking it a disgrace when I am outdone by younger men that it is my particular pride and delight to see our age outgrow its old unlettered lethargy and put forth the fresh and fruitful blossoms of good literature. Nor do I claim any share in the credit of this for myself, except in so far as my own writings have aroused some men to more humane studies; so you must not think that I accept the praise which you offer me with more charity than truth.

Of course it is no new thing for distinguished abilities to be found in Hungary, since the celebrated Janus Pannonius made such a name in poetry that Italy readily yielded him the palm. Then Piso – you refresh my memory

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943

18 Pannonius] Janus Pannonius (Ivan Česmički), a famous Hungarian humanist. After studies in Italy he returned to his country and was bishop of Pécs from 1459 to his death in 1474. In July 1518, when Erasmus was in Basel, Froben published a selection of his poems edited by Beatus Rhenanus; cf BRE Ep 76.

19 palm] Literally, 'gave him the tuft of grass,' which in some ancient athletic contests was a sign that the loser admitted defeat; cf *Adagia* I ix 78.

19 Piso] The tutor of Louis II; cf Ep 850:21n.

of him, and the recollection is as delightful as was his company long ago in Rome: who more learned, who more gay than he? I think his majesty your king is to be envied even more for his tutor than for his crown. Here too there was a move to make me tutor to Prince Ferdinand. He is indeed a young man divinely gifted, wonderfully teachable, the natural seat of honour and virtue, and with a charmingly serious demeanour; only there were good reasons for my reluctance to commit myself to court life. Yet, as he told me himself, he has my book on the education of a prince constantly in his hands.

As I read Velius' poem, which reached me recently, I seem to hear the trumpet-tones of Lucan; he should be writing of famous monarchs, not of an Erasmus. I shall never encourage you to undertake an eight days' journey, as you suggest, for the purpose of seeing a poor creature like myself; I know very well that you would regret your journey, and I should suffer some loss in your good opinion of me. If there is anything worth a visit in your humble servant, you have had a view of it in what I write. Nor, for that matter, am I a Livy, and you some unlettered tourist from Gades. Furthermore, what present can you be preparing for me? Is not this letter of yours, in which you offer me your heart, the most generous of all presents? To me, at least, no more precious memento of you could be offered, especially as your Lordship condescended to write a long letter in your own hand. Farewell.

Louvain, 1519, 20 April
Erasmus of Rotterdam in his own hand

944 / To Caspar Ursinus Velius — Louvain, [c 20 April 1519]

This letter answers Ep 851. It is clearly contemporary with Ep 943 and was published in the *Farrago*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO CASPAR VELIUS, GREETING

You were not satisfied apparently, my learned friend Velius, with a most eloquent but most mendacious poem in my praise, but you must needs add a letter too, which might be mistaken for a panegyric. Even that was not enough; for you add a heroic poem so sublime and in such splendour of

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23 Ferdinand] See Ep 917 introduction, and for Erasmus' personal acquaintance with him at Mechelen see Ep 927.

28 poem] See Ep 851:53n.

35 Livy] A man came all the way from Gades (Cadiz) to set eyes on the historian Livy; Pliny *Letters* 2.3.8.

944

5 heroic poem] Cf Ep 851:53n.

language that compared with it Lucan's trumpet might seem a twanging lyre. The publication of the first poem might make me blush, but it need cause you no regrets, and I cannot allow you to take Bartolini to task for this. I have the highest opinion of his judgment, and he has paid you in my hearing such a tribute as he has to no one else in this world of ours. He thought it his duty to see that such a successful poem was not lost to sight. I too, I admit, was in favour of publication; but modesty restrained me, and a sort of fear that I might seem to take pleasure not so much in your brilliance as in my own praises. Yet it was by no means unwelcome when someone appeared to blow these scruples to the winds. Your letter makes it clear that experience has given you almost equal felicity in both prose and verse, a thing which has fallen to the lot of few mortals hitherto. Moreover, as I read your heroic poem, I was reminded of Homer's *Battle of the Frogs and the Mice*, which recounts in tragic language the most ridiculous subject. And I admired your gifts all the more, because you had such barren material.

All the same, after being lauded by you in this fashion, I must not let it be said that I have made you absolutely no return, and so, my dear Velius, here is a piece of advice: in future, please exercise that most fertile vein of poetry that you possess on more promising subjects. I am delighted to hear that you have such a patron, and congratulate him in his turn on having you as his friend or his teacher. I have replied to his most polished letter with a very ordinary note. It does not escape my notice that this is discourteous and shameless. But what would you do? I am so much overwhelmed with work and am expected to deal with letters from such an immense number of people everywhere that I cannot reply to each one singly; perhaps I might even the score if I had fewer to deal with, though Hercules himself was not ashamed to yield to two adversaries at once. Farewell, dearest Velius.

Louvain, [1518]

945 / To Guillaume de Croy Louvain, 20 April 1519

This letter, published in the *Farrago*, is a flattering reply to a short note from the young cardinal, who was continuing his studies in Louvain (cf Ep 628:70n) and was unwilling to release his tutor, Vives, whom Erasmus had proposed as preceptor for Prince Ferdinand (cf Ep 927 introduction). Erasmus now faced a second embarrassment in that Latomus' dialogues *De trium linguarum ... ratione*

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7 first poem] The *Genethliacon;* for Bartolini's involvement cf Ep 851:22n.
25 patron] Thurzo; cf Ep 943.
29 letters] Cf Ep 941:3n.
31 Hercules] Cf *Adagia* I v 39.

(cf Ep 934 introduction) were dedicated to the cardinal. As soon as his *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* was ready Erasmus must have sent Croy a copy together with an explanatory letter (cf Ep 959:41–3). The cardinal probably replied with a short acknowledgment, perhaps saying politely that he hoped to read the *Apologia* soon and that he expected it to resemble the other pamphlets, that is, those by Mosellanus and Latomus. For Croy's subsequent support of the Collegium Trilingue cf de Vocht CTL I 413, 526–8.

TO THE MOST REVEREND GUILLAUME, CARDINAL DE CROY, ARCHBISHOP OF TOLEDO ETC FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Most reverend Lord and right honourable Prince, your note, laconic in its brevity but vividly expressed, gave me a sample of a keen and lively mind; for on this point, I think, you will allow your humble servant to gauge the lion by his claw. Literature is indeed happy if it is to find such well-wishers, and happier still if it finds not wishes only but active support. Your Lordship guesses rightly that this pamphlet will be like the others; it is very like – in other words, sad stuff. But I was unwilling to lay out serious work on such rubbish and thought it not unreasonable that the lid should fit the dish. If your Eminence will be so good as to add the name of Erasmus to the list of your admirers, I will give you good reason not to think you have an idle or ungrateful recruit. Christ keep you long in health and wealth, to the restoration of true religion and the promotion of good literature.

Louvain, 20 April 1519

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946 / To [Jan Briart of Ath] Louvain, [c 22 April 1519]

This letter reflects another of Erasmus' current troubles at Louvain (cf Ep 930:12n). Speaking at the graduation ceremony of a new licentiate in theology, the Carmelite Jan Robyns (cf line 4n), on 21 February 1519, 'Vice-Chancellor' Briart chose to attack Erasmus' newly published *Encomium matrimonii* (cf Ep 604:12n) for what seemed to him an impious challenge to the ideal of celibacy. He did not name the piece or the author, but his audience knew what to think. A meeting between the two men followed (line 7), attended by Dorp, who supported Erasmus, and by Gillis van Delft (cf LB IX 107D; Ep 922:28n). Briart conceded that his charges were ill founded. Since they had been made in public, Erasmus would be entitled to make a public reply. He wrote a short,

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945

6 gauge the lion by his claw] Cf *Adagia* I ix 34.

11 the lid should fit the dish] Cf *Adagia* I x 72.

respectful *Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii* (LB IX 105–12). It is dated 1 March 1519 and was published by Martens, no doubt without delay (cf Ep 916 introduction) and reprinted by Froben in May. Unfortunately Briart's disciples renewed the attack in the wake of Erasmus' controversy with Latomus (cf Ep 934 introduction), who was one of their number. In order to stop them, Erasmus sent Briart this appeal (see de Vocht CTL I 313–14). An approximate date is suggested by a comparison with Ep 948:167–71 – very likely another reference to the detractor N.

This letter was published by Erasmus in the *Farrago* of October 1519. That he preferred to suppress N's name is not surprising, but that he did not wish to name Briart is noteworthy. In Erasmus' *Apologia de laude matrimonii* Briart's name is mentioned in a most respectful, even friendly manner; and the tone of this letter is no different. But there is little doubt that Erasmus was privately more and more incensed against the 'vice-chancellor' (cf Epp 843:538n, 2045); yet had he known about the unfortunate publication of the *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium* at the time the *Farrago* letters were being prepared for print, he might well have been anxious to forestall any suspicions by identifying Briart as the recipient of this respectful letter; see Ep 948:27n.

ERASMUS TO A CERTAIN THEOLOGIAN, GREETING

Most learned teacher, I perceive that this poisonous habit of detraction spreads more widely and grows more deadly day by day: so barefaced are the lies about myself spread shamelessly by a certain N, a licentiate, as they call him, first in Louvain, then in Mechelen, and now in Antwerp. I see no remedy, unless you with your wisdom and your authority will put an end to this plague. I had agreed on a method of doing so with yourself and Dorp. My own conscience does not rebuke me for ever having written a word that might do hurt to religion and piety. To disagree I hope we have no cause and will do all I can to ensure that we have no opportunity. Latomus had invited me to a confrontation of our arguments, and this I carried out with perfect courtesy, so that, unless he is wondrous hard to please, he should have no cause for offence. But it would be better to speak of all this, if you will be so kind as to name a time. May Christ's wrath be upon me if I wish for anything which I know to be displeasing to him. I will endure any misrepresentation,

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946

4 N] Henry de Vocht suggests that he was the Carmelite Jan Robyns (not to be confused with Erasmus' friend, Jan Robbyns, dean of Mechelen), at whose graduation ceremony Briart had spoken (cf introduction). The Carmelites had houses in Mechelen and Antwerp, and some of them, like Robyns' friend Nicolaas Baechem Egmondanus, prior of Louvain (cf Ep 948:141n), were notorious critics of Erasmus; see Ep 1072, de Vocht CTL I 349.

however false, provided I am not falsely maligned as a heretic – a task some people are now engaged on, as I will show you when we meet. Farewell.

[1515]

947 / To Philippus Melanchthon Louvain, 22 April 1519

This letter answers Ep 910 and was published in the *Farrago*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO PHILIPPUS MELANCHTHON, GREETING

The man who gave me a hint of your opinion is neither wretch nor rascal but a particularly open-hearted friend and well disposed to us both. Nor have you any reason to be so much annoyed with him, for you yourself admit the truth of something he said to me, not with any desire of making mischief between us but because the topic happened to come up in conversation. Though the man did not say you disapproved of anything in my paraphrase; he said the New Testament, on which I would sooner accept your opinion than on the paraphrase, for no one will easily pronounce on that who has not been through all the ancient commentators with his eyes well and truly open. But do not think me such an inconstant friend that for any slight difference of opinion I might be a friend no longer, or so unfamiliar with criticism as to be much moved by a free expression of opinion from this man or that.

Nor have I any wish to prevent the opinions of scholars from being unfettered, provided they are correct. I think your remark to me would have been more correct if you had put it the other way round: while the opinions of scholars ought to be unfettered, they ought also to be correct. But you yourself withdraw that first opinion of yours and move your man back again. Besides which it is desirable that the opinions of scholars, and especially of those who are devotees of the literary Muses, should be not only correct but honest and fair. You can see the venom with which certain persons conspire

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947

3 The man] Somebody Erasmus had met during his travels in the summer of 1518 or a visitor to Louvain soon after his return, perhaps Eobanus Hessus (cf Ep 877:9–11). He was not necessarily the person criticized by Melanchthon in Ep 910:4. The often noted similarity between that passage and Mosellanus' reference to Tranquillus Andronicus in Ep 911:47–9 may well be accidental. It rather seems that the defence of Melanchthon in the postscript of Ep 911 was added only as an after-thought. At any rate, Ep 991 seems to preclude the possibility that Erasmus here refers to Andronicus.

20 move your man] A metaphor from an ancient board-game; Cf *Adagia* I v 55.

against the humanities. It is only fair that we too should 'Cretan with Cretan stand against the foe.' It is a mighty bulwark, is harmony. In any case, there is one thing I want you to be sure of, that I love my friend Philippus with all my heart and take no common interest in the success of his most promising talents.

I can hardly say how delighted I am with the hymn in which, like old Orpheus reborn, you sing the praises of the angels. I have also read that inaugural lecture of yours, in which you preach classical learning, boldly too and with great spirit as a young man and a German should. But, if you will take advice from your friend Erasmus, I could wish that you put more energy into staking out the claim of liberal studies than into attacking their opponents. They deserve, it is true, to be torn in pieces by the concerted attacks of the learned, but the other method, if I mistake not, will be found more profitable. Besides which we must try very hard to show ourselves superior to them not only in eloquence but in modesty and civilized behaviour.

Martin Luther's way of life wins all men's approval here, but opinions vary about his teaching. I myself have not yet read his books. He has made some justified criticisms, but I wish they had been as happily expressed as they were outspoken. I have written to Duke Frederick about him, and also because I long to know in what spirit he received the *Lives of the Caesars* which I dedicated to him. Farewell, most learned Melanchthon, and strive with all your might to equal and even surpass the high hopes which Germany entertains of your gifts and your character.

Louvain, 22 April 1519

Mind you do not overwork, that you may have strength as long as

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24 'Cretan with Cretan ... foe'] Cf Ep 916:412n.

29 hymn] It was never printed and is apparently lost today. On 24 September 1518 in a letter to Spalatinus Melanchthon listed a Greek hymn to the angels among the writings he expected to publish in the near future; cf Melanchthon *Werke* VII-1 Ep 6. In February 1519 Bonifacius Amerbach was looking for a copy and learnt that an autograph fragment, with annotations, existed in Pforzheim; see AK II Ep 646.

31 inaugural lecture] Erasmus' expression 'praedicas' suggests that he meant the text of Melanchthon's inaugural lecture at Wittenberg. It was first published under the title *Sermo ... de corrigendis adolescentiae studiis* (Wittenberg: J. Grunenberg [autumn] 1518) and soon reprinted several times. It contained spirited attacks on Rome and the leading theologians of Germany and Paris; see Melanchthon *Werke* III 29–42.

44 to know] Ep 939:7–18; the dedicatory preface for Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars* is Ep 586.

49 overwork] Cf Ep 933:46–51.

possible for the promotion of the humanities; for I hear that your health is not absolutely impregnable. In the end there is another reason for looking after yourself – to disappoint these barbarians. Farewell once more.

948 / To Petrus Mosellanus Louvain, 22 April 1519

Allen's text for this letter is based on: 1/ a volume published by Mosellanus himself, which also contained Ep 980 and Mosellanus' oration at the opening ceremony of the Leipzig disputation between Eck, Karlstadt, and Luther, 27 June–16 July 1519, *Petri Mosellani oratio de ratione disputandi* (Leipzig: M. Lotter, n d, and Augsburg: S. Grimm and M. Wirsung 1519); 2/ Erasmus' *Farrago* of October 1519 (where the text was evidently edited from his rough draft); 3/ Erasmus' *Epistolae ad diversos*, August 1521, where Erasmus made some additions, in particular lines 150–61.

This letter is clearly intended as the public expression of support which Mosellanus had requested in Ep 911:49–52. In that letter he had also treated the planned Leipzig disputation as a ridiculous exercise in scholastic theology. His inaugural oration shows that by the time the disputation took place he was aware of its significance and tried to take an impartial attitude. Although he was accused of hostility towards Eck, his views remained closer to those of Erasmus than to Luther's.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO PETRUS MOSELLANUS, GREETING

Some time ago, my dear Petrus, from your first letter I conceived an affection for your mind, which seemed to me in those days to be sensible and lively – for gifts of this sort have always been my favourites; I do not like the element of excess, tending to enthusiasm rather than judgment, in some of our countrymen – and this affection was increased by your second letter, which was both more scholarly and more elegant than the other. As soon, however, as I had read your oration in defence of the study of classical languages against those who, where the art of writing is concerned, are tongue-tied and in denigrating the humanities are as fluent as you please, I thought your gifts so full of promise that I had hardly ever seen their like – your style is so lively, it flows along carrying the reader with it, yet is soundly based on

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948

2 first letter] Ep 560

6 second letter] Ep 911

8 oration] *Oratio de variarum linguarum cognitione paranda* (Leipzig: V. Schumann August 1518), also mentioned in lines 42, 77. For the echo in Louvain cf Ep 934 introduction.

reason; you are acute in detecting a good argument and show yourself the skilled craftsman in presenting it. Your language testifies to wide and varied reading, which in a young man is all the more admirable.

You tell me in your part of the world the battle rages between the champions of good literature and the defenders of ignorance outworn, and this does not surprise me, for it rages everywhere; one might think it the result of a conspiracy or of destiny in some form. I have consulted several eminent astrologers, and they ascribe this evil to the eclipse last year. It happened, if I am not mistaken, in Aries, and Aries belongs to the head; besides which, Mercury was blighted by the influence of Saturn. Consequently, they say, this evil afflicts particularly those who are under Mercury, among whom they specify the inhabitants of Louvain. For this university, the peaceful home of literary studies, has been racked by extraordinary turmoil, the like of which I have never seen in all my life. You would have thought some Ate was confounding the whole business of learning.

But what the astrologers foretell is their own business. My opinion, if I have any eyes in my head, is that the whole thing is deliberately organized by a sworn conspiracy, so universal is this outburst, as though at a given signal, against the classical languages and the liberal arts. The clans are gathering to defend themselves by numbers if nothing else against a mere handful. They have made a division of labour among themselves, some of them talking nonsense at the dinner-table or in the council-chamber, others ranting to the ignorant mob which is so easily imposed upon; some arguing in the lecture-room, some dropping their poison in the ears of princes. Some of them write books, especially in Cologne, where the university has always had its stubborn defenders of bad literature. There has lately come before

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20 astrologers] Cf Epp 930:12n, 936:60n.

20 eclipse] See Allen's note: there was no eclipse in Aries in 1518, but on 8 June the sun was eclipsed in Gemini; cf J.F. Schroeder *Spezieller Kanon der zentralen Sonnen- und Mondfinsternisse* (Kristiania 1923) 57 and map 111b. On 6 June Mercury and Saturn had been in direct opposition to one another. The relation of Aries to the head and the evil power of Saturn as opposed to the neutral influence of Mercury are traditional elements of astrological belief; cf eg *Eyn nyge Kalender, recht holdende; und eyn nutte, künstlick ... bock* (Lübeck 1519) ff H iv verso, K iii–iv.

27 Ate] The Greek personification of harm, fate, guilt (cf Ep 856:19). There is little doubt that Erasmus is alluding to 'Atensis,' that is, Jan Briart of Ath (cf Ep 843:538n, 946 introduction). The same allusion occurs in Ep 991:66, and in Ep 1029 Briart is called 'Noxus' (from the Latin *noxa*, harm). In the *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium* (cf Ep 934 introduction) Briart is grossly and transparently abused under the name of Ate.

37 Cologne] Cf Ep 821:19n.

the public here too a dialogue by the theologian Jacobus Latomus, a man who in old days was not particularly against the humanities, and my good friend, nor can I guess what has suddenly changed his whole nature. Some suspect that a good part of his first book is directed against the oration in which you preach the classical languages, but that much the greatest part is a veiled attack on me. I have rebutted this suggestion in a pamphlet thrown off rather than written in a couple of days, for it galled me to have to devote much labour to this sort of nonsense. Nor shall I recommend you to answer the man; or if you do answer him, pray use argument rather than invective, especially as he has refrained from mentioning names and writes with very little venom. Even were he really venomous, I should advise you to keep your pen under control, to make clear to posterity that we have not only the better cause but better manners.

Frenzy in the old days was attributed to poets; now it seems to have gone to live with the very people who most ought to keep a wise passiveness. Not but what there is a great gulf between the poets' frenzy and theirs. One gave us so many notable works, on history, on manners, on the emotions, on the starry heavens, on the nature of plants, trees, gems, and living creatures, and on geography. The frenzy of these other men has no offspring except venomous but tedious and pointless innuendoes, in which lies all their hope of victory. In this affair first place is taken by certain troupes of monks; and as there are enough of them to put the Grand Turk himself to flight, they have seconded numerous emissaries to this noble enterprise: they wander up and down sowing foul libels or preach sermons encouraging the mob to throw stones. They have killed off their Erasmus so many times and attacked me with baseless rumours! Behaving like this, they see themselves as pillars of the Christian religion, and worthy of course to be kept in idleness by the rest of the world at its own expense. Though I should be sorry to see the resulting unpopularity laid at the door of the monastic orders, whose better members all disapprove of this behaviour. But everywhere it is the most outrageous who rule the roost, and they do everything as though all the rest were behind them. And thus a few reprobates give a bad name to the whole body.

On this point I find not merely an absence of Christian feeling in those who claim the glory of religion as their special province; I find a lack of ordinary modesty and common sense. As they spread abroad the most tangible falsehoods, they can easily guess that the time will come when they

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39 dialogue] See Ep 934 introduction.
45 couple of days] Cf Epp 934:10n, 952:23.
63 killed] Cf Ep 854:9n.

are shown up by the facts. What could be more shameless than the monk of whom you speak in your oration – the one who, I having said in my note that συλλαλοῦντες is more correctly translated *confabulantes*, had the face to declare in public that I regard the text of Scripture as no better than old wives' fables, whereas everywhere I give the text so much authority that some people I know can hardly stomach it? There's a herald of heavenly doctrine for you, with a tongue sanctified to the preaching of Christ's glory! They think fit to behave like this and then are furious and confound heaven and earth if anyone lets fall a word of criticism of the ceremonies of certain monks, even if he does not drag their name into it; and though their malice is so open and uncontrolled that you would think them mad, it is their exquisite reason, they think, that must determine whether we are Christians or the reverse. Here too there was a theologian of the same kidney, who used to be thought a sensible man; but after making Luther's cause as unpleasant as he could before public audiences, ranting away about heresies and Antichrists and 'The faith is in danger,' he mixed in with his affair the whole business of classical languages and the humanities, repeating that these are the springs from which heresies flow. As though in old days eloquence had been a mark of heretics rather than orthodox, or the begetters of recent heresies had not been quite unable to speak or write – in a word, much like our present opponents; or as though Luther had been equipped with these weapons, and not rather with scholastic authorities – as the word 'scholastic' is now understood.

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76 monk] Mosellanus describes him as a Dominican of Leipzig. He took issue with the treatment of Matt 17:3 in Erasmus' New Testament. Erasmus translated 'colloquentes' but explained in his note that the Greek term really meant 'confabulantes.' In subsequent editions he merely added a polemical sentence with reference to the Dominican, who, he said, was a bachelor of theology (cf LB VI 91–2). Allen discovered in a copy of a reprint of Mosellanus' *Oratio* (Basel: Froben May 1519, p 38; Oxford, Bodleian Library Tract. Luth. 4.50) an identification of the detractor, added on the margin by a contemporary hand: 'Ogssenfardium Paulensem intelligit.' This reference is no doubt to Johann Löblein, often called Ochsenfurt after his native town. He matriculated at Leipzig in 1496 and was a Dominican by 1498. In 1517 and 1519 he was regent of the Dominican monastery of St Paul's and in the latter year was also appointed preacher at its church. Having graduated MA, from 1518 he lectured on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard in preparation for the theological doctorate, but he died prematurely in 1523; see Gabriel M. Löhr *Die Dominikaner an der Leipziger Universität* (Vechta-Leipzig 1934) 92–3.

83 confound] Cf *Adagia* I iii 81.

88 theologian] He is not identified.

97 'scholastic'] Cf Ep 933:17.

When the emperor was in Antwerp lately, his eminence the cardinal of Sion, a man of learning and unfettered judgment, had invited me to dinner. He had been persuaded, as I learnt from his conversation, by some theologians, I know not who, to believe the most monstrous falsehood, that in the song of the Virgin Mary, the Magnificat, I had changed 'to Abraham and his seed' into 'and his seeds,' at grave risk to the Christian faith, because Paul wrote 'not in seeds, but in thy seed, which is Christ.' When I got home, I went to the book and realized how impudent and crazy the man must have been who invented this out of his own head.

There was another man, a Preacher, who complained to his congregation in a tearful voice that all the midnight watches he had devoted to defending the faith of Christ were fruitless and wasted. 'What is left for us,' he said, 'except to throw our books into the fire, now that men have arisen who write new books to put right the Paternoster and the Magnificat?' For my notes on the New Testament had just come out.

I myself heard a Carmelite I know, a man with powerful lungs and the title and violet bonnet of a doctor of divinity: when he knew I was there (for I was standing opposite him), he proceeded to lay to my charge two out of the three sins against the Holy Spirit. I was guilty of presumption, because I wrote new books to do down all the old ones and actually had not hesitated to emend the Lord's prayer and the song of Mary; and of attacking received truth, because having heard two preachers in one day, I had said at supper that neither of them really understood his text. The text was from 1 Peter chapter 4: 'Be ye therefore prudent and watch unto prayer, and above all things have continual charity in yourselves.' Here a good part of the sermon was spent in analysing the elements of prudence, though the Greek has σωφρονήσατε 'be sober,' and a good part in discussing 'in yourselves' and the process of charity, though 'in ἑαυτοῖς' means 'among yourselves.' Yet I did not follow up their mistakes; I praised both sermons, and added 'What a

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99 cardinal] Matthäus Schiner (cf Ep 584). This incident, in May 1517, and the one which follows next were recalled again in Ep 1967.

103 changed] In Luke 1:55 (LB VI 228A). The charge is baseless.

105 Paul] Gal 3:16, abbreviated

108 Preacher] For members of the Dominican order who had criticized Erasmus cf the indexes of CWE 5–8.

114 Carmelite] The same incident is related in a note on 1 Pet 4:7–8 (LB VI 1052E) which first appeared in the New Testament of 1519, and in Ep 2045. The latter account permits the identification of the Carmelite: he was the prior of the Antwerp house, Sebastiaan Craeys (d 1523), who preached a sermon in Erasmus' presence at Pentecost (31 March) 1517. For Erasmus' hostility towards the Carmelites cf the indexes of CWE 4–8.

pity this was lacking!' for five words from my commentary would have saved them from this mistake. Nor is it a trivial misdemeanour for a man who teaches in public with such authority not to understand the basis of his whole sermon. When the doctor I speak of had heard from somebody or other what I said, his reply was: 'I have often preached before you, and by the grace of Christ I shall do so again. But if anyone says that a preacher does not understand the text of his sermon, especially when he has taken it from Holy Scripture, that man sins against the Holy Ghost.' Pieter Gillis, a very faithful friend, was standing beside me, and he was so angry I thought he would explode; I could not refrain from laughing – who would not laugh at such ridiculous stuff? Yet these men think it fair that for the sake of one ranter such as that an immense crowd of monks should be kept at the public expense.

When the New Testament restored by me first appeared, a Carmelite divine, who is in his own opinion a wonderful scholar and a holy man, started clamouring that a great crisis threatened the Christian religion and that the coming of Antichrist was at hand; for they use this dramatic language to rouse the superstitious multitude. When it came to a discussion between us and I asked him with some urgency to produce what offended him in my New Testament, he replied in a simple-minded way that he had never read the book or even set eyes on it. This is what I usually find: none raise a more offensive clamour than those who do not read what I write.

The New Testament had scarcely come out when some Preacher or other in Strasbourg (for that order, which once produced so many men of learning, now has a great many who expect somehow to rule the roost) was thundering against the book full blast, as they say, before a crowd of students. Jakob Sturm, a young man of excellent wit and good judgment, unusually learned and a very great supporter of mine, happened to be there. He let the man spout on until he had had his fill. When he had said everything he could think of, and in his own opinion to very good effect, Sturm asked him if he had seen the book; and he said no. 'How then,' said Sturm, 'can you say so much about a book you have not read nor even seen?' The laughter was general; and even so he was not ashamed of his impertinence. If I told you all the stories of this kind, there would be no end to it.

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128 commentary] Cf LB VI 1052.

141 Carmelite] Nicolaas Baechem, called Egmondanus, who had apparently begun his attacks upon Erasmus in Brussels in the autumn of 1516 (cf Ep 483:29n, Allen Ep 1162:88–90). The incident reported here seems to have occurred soon after Erasmus' move to Louvain in the summer of 1517; cf Allen Ep 1196:115–22.

153 full blast] Cf *Adagia* I v 96.

154 Sturm] See Ep 302:14n.

The other day one of these scandalmongers, who thinks himself not only a theologian (which is the last thing he is) but even a little bit of a saint, writing to a friend called me, who have tried with so much effort to restore and explain the text of Holy Writ, a perverter of Holy Writ and himself its defender.

And in these last few days another man, a loquacious fool who does not know how to speak and yet cannot hold his tongue, had been enthusiastically declaiming against my reputation in various towns as though he had been hired to do it, attacking my character as well as my teaching with the most slanderous falsehoods. It so happened that we found ourselves at the same dinner-party the day after one of my friends had written to tell me part of the story. I protested openly, in the hearing of several scholars and produced the lies he had used to blacken me. The man made it clear enough that the material for his sermons had not been his own reading but hearsay from other people. And just as though it were a trivial offence to attack another man's character with fabrications, these men have the effrontery with all this on their heads to approach Christ's holy table without seeking reconciliation with the man whom they have wronged. So true is that remark of Tychonius that what we wish is holy to us. And this is quite a new form of scandalous attack. First they condemn anyone they do not like; then they hunt for holes they can pick in the man they have condemned. If a man resists their malice or protests against it, there is a cry that peace and tranquillity are being overset, precisely as though you boxed a man's ears and told him to keep quiet for fear he might commit a breach of the peace. They are so grand and so touchy – a single word can upset them – that we have to show a patience worthy of Socrates. And they hold other mens' reputation so cheap, while expecting their own to be held so dear!

But how foolish of me, my dear Petrus, to waste so much time on this! I will add one more story and then stop. England possesses two universities by no means obscure, Cambridge and Oxford. Greek is taught in both, and in Cambridge without disturbance, because the head of the institution is Father John Fisher, the bishop of Rochester, whose learning and life are alike worthy of a divine. But at Oxford, where a young man of more than common

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162 scandalmongers] Lee, in his correspondence with Lips; cf Ep 922:33–5.
167 another man] Probably N of Ep 946
180 Tychonius] Quoted in Augustine's Ep 93:43; cf *Adagia* IV vii 16.
187 patience worthy of Socrates] Cf *Adagia* V i 56
194 at Oxford] The incident may have occurred in the spring of 1518, when the court was at Abingdon near Oxford and was attended by Pace and More, who then wrote his famous letter to the university against the opponents of Greek studies (cf Ep 829:6n). The two detractors of Greek studies in this incident and

learning was publicly teaching Greek with some success, some barbarian or other in a public sermon began to inveigh against Greek studies with monstrous great falsehoods. The king, who being quite a scholar himself is a supporter of the humanities, happened to be in the neighbourhood, and hearing about this from More and Pace, he declared that those who wished should be welcome to follow Greek. And so those rascals were put to silence. I only wish we had some such prince or viceroy, for ours is far away. You are more fortunate, if what I heard some years ago about Duke George is true.

Here is another story like the last. A theologian I could name, when he was preaching at court before the same king, began to declaim against Greek studies and modern interpreters in a style as brazen as it was stupid. Pace glanced at the king to see how he was taking this, and the king soon gave Pace a friendly smile. When the sermon was done, the theologian was sent for, and More was given the task of defending Greek studies against him. The king was pleased to be present at the disputation; and when More had spoken fluently and at length and the preacher's reply was awaited, he fell on his knees and contented himself with begging for forgiveness, extenuating what he had done with the plea that as he was preaching he was carried away by some spirit to make this attack on Greek. 'Well,' said the king, 'that was not the spirit of Christ; it must have been folly.' Then he asked the man whether he had read anything by Erasmus; for it had not escaped the king's notice that he had directed some shafts at me. He said no. 'That shows,' said the king, 'what a fool you are, if you condemn what you have not read.' 'I have read something,' the theologian said; 'it was called the Folly.' Here Pace interrupted with 'And a very suitable subject too, may it please your Majesty.' Then the divine thought up another argument to palliate his offence: 'I am not all that much against Greek,' he said, 'only because Greek is derived from Hebrew.' The king was amazed at the man's extraordinary stupidity and told him to go, but on condition that he never appeared again to preach at court.

I cannot refrain fom adding one other very ridiculous thing. A certain bishop of the order of Preachers who is confessor to the queen, a woman of

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the following one are not identified; cf E.E. Reynolds *St Thomas More* (New York 1957) 104–5.

201 for ours is far away] This remark was suppressed by Erasmus in the *Farrago*, perhaps an indication that it was meant to convey criticism, but cf Epp 969:19–20, 970:16–17.

202 Duke George] For the sources of his favourable impression of Duke George of Saxony cf Epp 586:292–5, 1122.

226 bishop] Jorge de Ateca (d 1545), confessor to Queen Catherine and bishop of Llandaff (Wales) from 1517 to his resignation in 1537, after her death. In 1538 he

great sense and saintliness and not unlearned, had persuaded her that I had perpetrated something inexcusable by correcting the works of Jerome, a very learned man and more than that, a saint. In this belief she protested as follows to one of the courtiers, who is a friend of mine: 'Was not Jerome a very great scholar?' 'Yes, ma'am.' 'Is he not now in heaven?' 'Yes, ma'am; he is.' 'Very well then: how will you defend your friend Erasmus, who has corrected his books? Is he cleverer than Jerome?' And people here too seriously preach this who regard themselves as pillars of the church. Such are my opponents, such are the champions of Christ's religion. Nothing could be more stupid, more absurd. And yet it is with malicious falsehoods like these that I am vilified in front of the uneducated multitude and poor foolish women.

But enough of this nonsense. If I have been rather slow in answering your letter, pray imagine anything to be the reason rather than that I undervalue you. I am overwhelmed by the daily bundles of letters. If I do not answer, I am thought discourteous; if I do, I suffer in three ways. First, I do not even give satisfaction to the people to whom I must perforce reply the first thing that comes into my head; secondly, by writing like this in a hurry I make my style, which is bad enough in itself, still worse; and lastly, I endure some loss of reputation. How absurd to prefer to apply to an Italian for what one has at home! This is like the common herd, who think the best doctor the man who pretends to be an Arab or an Indian, seeking reputation among fools from the distance they think he has travelled. Educated men ought to be as far from this prejudice as can be. Whoever is familiar with good literature should in our eyes count as an Italian. It is not my plan in future to join battle with this class of men. I have now reached the age-limit and earned my release; I am tired with running and hand on the torch to you younger men. Even without me you will win, if you keep on as you have begun.

Philippus Melanchthon needs no support with me and no apologist. That young man is a great favourite of mine. It would need to be a very grievous wrong to sever my friendship for him. Farewell.

Louvain, 22 April 1519

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had returned to Spain and was named bishop of the joint see of Ampurias in Catalonia and Tempio in Sardinia.

241 overwhelmed] Cf Ep 941:3n.

246 an Italian] Cf Ep 911:36–49.

253 hand on the torch] Cf *Adagia* I ii 38.

949 / From Lodovico Ricchieri Milan, 22 April 1519

The original autograph is in the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel: MS Gudianus latinus 2° 25, f 128. This letter was printed by Allen after *Gudii epistolae* ed Pieter Burman (Utrecht 1697) and LB, without knowledge of the original. As a result the address is omitted in his edition and replaced by a salutation, which is not in the original letter.

For Ricchieri and his *Antiquae lectiones* see Ep 469:10n. He wrote this letter upon learning that Erasmus had launched a serious charge against him in his *Adagia* of 1517–18; see line 11n.

Francesco Calvo who is devoted both to you and to myself, after his recent departure from your native Germany paid me a visit, as nearly all men of letters do, and I asked him particularly what new things he brought back from such long wanderings which might help the cause of learning. 'Not much, really,' he said, 'but there will be a few more things quite soon.' 'And how is my friend Erasmus?' said I. 'Is he still producing? He is a very fertile field, like that famous land at Byzantium that used to bear a hundredfold; there is always a crop growing that will soon be ready to be cut.' He smiled: 'What would you say if you knew what he thinks of you? It's not very friendly.' 'Pray how can that be? What reason can he have for any estrangement?' 'He says that in your *Antiquae lectiones* you have dissented from his opinion, with the air of a man who wants to put him right.' I was astonished, absolutely astonished; no graver or more unexpected blow could have befallen me. My conscience was crystal clear; I had been perfectly open without a trace of hypocrisy, and I knew well I had used no expression in which a man with a nose like a bloodhound could have scented anything coming from me which he might consider a slur on his reputation. This has been my bearing even towards simple folk and those from whom little was to

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949

1 Calvo] Cf Epp 831 introduction, 925:5–8.

7 Byzantium] Pliny *Historia naturalis* 5.24 and 17.41 mentions the exceptional fertility of Byzacium in North Africa; in both places in the text the name was corrupted commonly to Byzantium.

11 dissented from his opinion] On Plutarch's understanding of the adage 'Choenici ne insideas' (*Adagia* I i 2). In his *Antiquae lectiones* (Venice 1516, 441–3; Basel 1542, 610–12) Ricchieri had proposed a new interpretation of Plutarch's text. He criticized earlier commentators but did not mention any names. Erasmus retaliated in the *Adagia* edition of 1517–18 with a charge that Ricchieri had extensively borrowed from him. After Ricchieri's death he added a short eulogy without withdrawing the earlier charge. Ep 602 proves that he did not mind recommending Ricchieri's work; cf Phillips 123.

be expected; how much more towards you who are in my eyes (do not suspect me of trying to curry favour) a man of the first rank. If I seem to differ from you, need you promptly have the law on me, as if I had rubbed off some contagion on you or tried to box your ears? Such an idea is unworthy of a scholar, for it always has been permissible and always will be to add to what has been discovered and to think of fresh solutions if men's intelligence allows, provided this is done without venom, without the gnawing malice of some pretended supporter, and we do not descend to foolish and vulgar abuse. In fact, if you care to look more closely, you will find yourself singled out for praise, clearly enough though not by name. In this straightforward way the greatest men have always competed with their predecessors; and in your own works you are not without experience of this kind of contest. Do not therefore judge me unfairly, for unless one side gives the provocation there can be no dispute.

But there is another point. I have lately read, on a hint from Francesco Sacchetti of Pavia, a good scholar and a member of the council, your complaints in the last edition of your *Proverbs* that in my books I never mention you by name, although it is probable that your works have given me some assistance. My learned friend, around the time when my own things came before the public,I had read absolutely nothing that came from your workshop apart from the *Proverbs*. When they appeared, I felt myself struck to the heart. My own collection of proverbs was on the stocks at the same time, and I know for a fact that you were told this in Padua. When you forestalled me, what you did nearly reduced me to suicide. All my nights of toil went for nothing; my lungs so often filled with smoke from the lamp, my clothes soaked in honest sweat were a dead loss. Imagine what I felt then! I had to set up a new web, to enter a fresh field of battle, unless I should be willing to let my endurance be crushed and plunge myself in more than Cimmerian gloom.

This then is the origin of my *Antiquae lectiones*, and when they have been further digested and enriched as well – for things worth knowing to the number of five thousand more or less will be added – they will be published

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26 vulgar abuse] Ricchieri employs another proverb (cf *Adagia* I vii 73) referring to the wagon which could serve the ancient comedians as a stage for freely criticizing public figures and even gods.

34 Sacchetti] Francesco Sacchetti is not identified.

40 my own collection of proverbs] It was never published.

41 Padua] Late in 1508, Erasmus visited Padua and Ferrara, and it seems that he met Ricchieri; cf Ep 556:32 and *Adagia* I i 2 in the 1517–18 edition.

42 suicide] Cf *Adagia* I v 21.

47 Cimmerian gloom] Cf *Adagia* II vi 34.

without delay; whereupon, to earn your good will by some more substantial offering, I shall inscribe one book to you by name with a formal dedication, with the special object of putting on record how much your labours have contributed to life. You may say if you please that I am 'untwining other men's garlands to make new chaplets of my own,' but I shall shortly give you and everyone else satisfaction. Till then, farewell.

Milan, 22 April 1519

Your sincere friend Lodovico Celio

To the right learned doctor of divinity Erasmus of Rotterdam. In Basel, or wherever he may be

950 / To Jan Šlechta Louvain, 23 April 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago*. Šlechta says in his answer, Ep 1021, that this letter did not reach him until 11 September because it had remained in the hands of Justus Jonas (cf Ep 963:6n) for four months for want of a safe messenger. The lost letter which Erasmus here answers had evidently been Šlechta's first approach to him and had invited him to visit Bohemia.

Jan Šlechta (1466–1525), of Všehrdry in western Bohemia, received his BA at Prague in 1484 and later (cf lines 7–8) became the secretary of Vladislav II. About 1507 he retired from the court to his estates at Kostelec on the Elbe, north-east of Prague; see P.S. Allen *The Age of Erasmus* (Oxford 1914) 281–4.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE HONOURABLE
JAN ŠLECHTA OF KOSTELEC, GREETING

I must thank you for your panegyric (for it was that rather than a letter), which sings my praises with such ability and eloquence that it does more credit to the author of the encomium than to me, its object. I am delighted to think that there is no country without men to support higher studies and, what is more, to pursue them. Those sixteen years that you expended at the court of Vladislav, king of Hungary and Bohemia, were not wholly lost; of

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52 one book] Each book of the *Antiquae lectiones* had an individual dedicatory epistle. But the enlarged and newly arranged edition did not appear until 1542. By then the author and Erasmus were dead, and the promise was not carried out.

54 may say] In the *Adagia* of 1517–18; cf above 11n.

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8 Vladislav] Vladislav II Jagiello (c 1456–1516), King of Bohemia in 1471. Supported by the Hungarian barons who knew him to be weak, he gained recognition as king of Hungary in 1491, after the death of Matthias Corvinus.

that, this letter of yours is sufficient evidence. In any case, of all the praises that you pile upon me, I can accept nothing except that of a mind that longs to encourage Christian conduct and liberal studies. It is a great pleasure to me if anyone finds help in the fruit of my nightly vigils. I cannot sufficiently wonder at my unpopularity with some people I could name, seeing that hitherto my labours have made no one blacker by a single hair. I perceived that this prickly and dreary sort of theology gets daily worse, while the sources and the classical writers of orthodoxy are virtually regarded as obsolete. And so I have tried to recall all men to that genuine theology, not wholly condemning the studies that are accepted in the universities, but partly seeking to hold them in check and partly pointing out the additions I should wish to make. For I cannot accept those who have no use for liberal studies; but equally I disapprove of those who condemn the studies of modern theologians altogether.

I marvel at the impudence of that canon of Prague, whoever he may be, who has spun such a remarkable tissue of lies, like a he-spider, out of his own entrails. The people at Cologne once had a dispute with that excellent man Johann Reuchlin, but with me they have never quarrelled either in print or face to face, so far are they from burning my books and their author with them. On the contrary, whenever I have passed that way, the leading men have given me a distinguished welcome and sent me on my way most courteously. Not but what I could readily believe that there also may be there men who snarl at Erasmus in the company of their own sort; for instance, a certain member of the order of Preachers who recently related among his brethren as an ascertained fact that I had died at Louvain, and the lying fellow added a jesting comment fully worthy of him, 'With no light, no cross, no God.' His narrative evoked frequent applause from the monks who are his boon-companions. Well, if they are not afraid to invent such tales about

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14 single hair] Cf *Adagia* I viii 4.

21 condemn] Cf Epp 622 introduction, 947:42–3. For Erasmus' advocacy of a modus vivendi permitting the universities to combine traditional theology and the new learning see also Epp 952:49–51, 967A:16–18, 980:43–5, CWE 7 preface.

23 canon of Prague] We have no information on this episode related in Šlechta's lost letter.

26 never quarrelled] But cf lines 30–6, Ep 821:19–21.

29 welcome] Cf Epp 440:16n, 842 introduction, 866:26–31.

33 died] Probably in view of his severe illness in the autumn of 1518 (see Ep 867; cf Ep 854:9n). Luther had heard the rumour by 13 April (cf w *Briefwechsel* I Ep 167). For feuds with Dominicans cf the indexes of CWE 5–8.

34 no light] The defective grammar of this remark cannot be reproduced in an uninflected language (*sine lux* for *sine luce*).

me when I am not far away, it is less surprising if they lie like this in Prague. But from actions like this, which they perpetrate freely every day, one can guess what a Fury now dwells in them. As I hope for the love of Christ, I swear I am more sorry for their case than for my own. For I find support in a good conscience and in the favourable judgment of men of good will; for no mortal man has yet had the good fortune to please everyone all the time.

The New Testament has come out again in its new form, revised by me at the price of such sleepless nights as you would hardly credit, and enriched with a considerable amount of new material. Prefixed is an official letter from Leo the Tenth, in which he approves the old edition and encourages me to make this new one.

What business I can have in Prague I do not see. You promise that there will be no lack of people to convey me in safety wherever I wish, but I do not care for countries in which convoy of this kind is necessary. Here I am free to go where I please, even by myself. Not that I have any doubt of finding in your part of the world, as you say in your letter, plenty of good scholars and religious men, not polluted by the vices of schism. But it surprises me that none can be found to bring this whole division to an end. It is better to have concord on conditions that are not wholly fair than perfect fairness and divisions. For my part I fear it is the love of money – that universal enemy of high standards of behaviour – that does not allow concord to come into existence. Paul refuses no loss by which he may win Christ. There are in the world so many cardinals, so many bishops, so many princes: would that Christ might inspire some of them to take up this task in a truly Christian spirit! If Paul were supreme in Rome, I know very well he would not only submit to some reduction in his income, he would even accept some cut in his authority, if for this price he could purchase concord.

If we are never so fortunate as to meet face to face, the interchange of letters will make me feel that sometimes I am talking with you as I walk on the banks of your Elbe or you are living with me in Brabant. How small a part of friendship is the physical presence of our friends! Farewell, my honoured friend.

Louvain, 23 April 1519

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45 letter] Ep 864. A copy of the New Testament reached Šlechta on 14 May 1519; cf Ep 1021.

53 schism] The large majority of Bohemians, both clergy and laity, were Hussites. The archbishopric of Prague remained vacant until 1561. Conceivably Šlechta in his letter to Erasmus had taken issue with a generalizing reference to Bohemian schismatics in Ep 549:14 now published.

58 Paul] Cf Phil 3:8.

951 / To Ulrich von Hutten Louvain, 23 April 1519

This letter answers various points raised by Hutten in Ep 923. It was published in the *Farrago*.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND HUTTEN, GREETING

Plunged as I am in so much work that it is a marvel if I answer anyone at all, I have sent you more answers than you have sent me letters, assuming that what I send gets through to you; and yet you accuse me of being obstinately silent and pick a quarrel with me as though I were short of men to disagree with me. It was a great joy to hear from you that the archbishop of Mainz feels towards me as he does, and I never cease to think how happy you are in possessing such a patron. In any case, the book I have dedicated to him I sent long ago at my expense by the hands of a certain young man, and with it a letter for you and a preface for Wolfgang Angst. I understand from a letter from Rhenanus that he got as far as Basel; what he did in Mainz I do not know. I am surprised if he did not do everything I told him, since I added a list to remind him. I have prefixed to the book the archbishop's learned and elegant letter, not so much to put on record his kindness towards me as to fire others with zeal for the humanities by the example of so great a prince. And I think I have done some good; for that distinguished young man Guillaume de Croy, duke and bishop of Cambrai, archbishop of Toledo, and finally cardinal, though he seemed for other reasons properly devoted to liberal studies, seems even so to have felt a powerful stimulus when he read the archbishop's letter.

Your *Aula* has often been in my hands, but hitherto I have always been forced to drop it by some piece of business which interrupted me when I was longing to read it. What I have read, I like very much; for what is there of yours that I do not like? Your *Febris* and *Phalarismus* have been reprinted by someone or other. But the *Febris* is forbidden to be sold in Louvain, because it was thought to attack certain demigods by name; otherwise it is very much liked everywhere. The *Phalarismus*, because it was attached to the *Febris*, is

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2 anyone at all] Cf Ep 941:3n.

10 letter for you] Now missing, but apparently received by Hutten; cf Ep 986 introduction. Beatus Rhenanus' letter is also missing.

10 preface] Ep 919

14 letter] Ep 661; cf Ep 745 introduction.

17 Croy] For Erasmus' recent contacts with him see Epp 927, 945 introductions.

21 *Aula*] Cf Epp 863:36n, 923:22.

outlawed with it, but only in Louvain; for the despotic rule of this university extends no further. They had also undertaken to print your oration, nor do I know the reason why they postpone it.

But what is this I hear? Will my friend Hutten fight armed cap-à-pie in the battle line? I can see you were born for battle, when you fight not only with the written and the spoken word, but even with the arms of Mars. Though there is nothing heroic in your now daring to fight against a single adversary with so many on your side, seeing how you once routed so many foes all by yourself at Bologna. I praise your valiant spirit; but if you take my advice, you will keep your precious self safe for the Muses. Where shall we look for another man with your gifts, if anything happens to you, which heaven forfend? You know how Mars changes sides, and is not as well disposed as he should be to choicer spirits, being the biggest blockhead among all the gods. I hope all may go well; at least, if anything happens, you have built for yourself in your writings a monument more enduring than bronze. Even so, I shall not fail to do my part; if my own works have any power, 'from Time's long memory the circling years / Shall ne'er delete us.'

Your *Triumph* I have not yet seen. I was glad that they kept it dark so long on my advice, and no doubt they have toned down the whole argument. Of quarrelling there is no end. If I were better in everything else, in innuendo, lying, and abuse I am left far behind. I must frankly confess this, for it is the absolute truth. But in this field it is better to yield the palm than to fight to a dishonourable finish; for we ought to consider not only what suits the men against whom we write but also what is suitable for us, the writers. Moderation is sometimes more creditable than a victorious cause; and I have other things to do. I would rather spend a whole month expounding Paul or the Gospel than one day in squabbles like this. Farewell, dearest of mortals.

Louvain, 23 April 1519

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29 oration] *Ad principes Germaniae, ut bellum Turcis invehant, exhortatoria* 1st ed (Augsburg: Grimm and Wyrsung 1518); cf Ep 891:26n.

36 Bologna] A slight confusion; cf Ep 611:14n, 20n.

39 Mars] See Ep 911:13n.

42 monument] Horace *Odes* 3.30.1

43 if my own works] Virgil *Aeneid* 9.446–7

46 on my advice] Cf Ep 636:29n.

47 quarrelling] Cf Ep 930:12n.

49 palm] See Ep 943:19n.

53 Paul] Cf Ep 956.

952 / To Jan Becker of Borssele Louvain, 24 April 1519

This answer to Ep 932 was published in the *Farrago*.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND JAN OF BORSSELE, GREETING

I do not call that a letter; it was an incantation – you beg and pray and beseech me on so many grounds, even threatening me with an action for specific performance if I refuse to write something on the theory of preaching, just as though I were made of iron or adamant. Is there anywhere a field so fertile that it cannot be exhausted by over-cropping? I have been toiling at this barren and sterile plot of mine with continuous crops now for so many years, and do not make this good with any manure in the way of reading, except of a desultory kind. After such severe illness I must make some provision for re-establishing my health. Here, so far have I been from giving myself any indulgence that I have not even had leisure to be ill; and this Lent would nearly have been the death of me, had I not gone to Antwerp for a change of climate and of food. Moreover, while I was obliged to play the courtier at Mechelen, and to pay my respects to my patrons the bishop of Liège, the bishop of Utrecht, and the other magnates, your Adolph among them, I wasted several days. Finally, I am assailed by so many letters from all directions that in answering them a large part is wasted of the time that might have been spent on study.

After finishing the paraphrase on the two Epistles to the Corinthians, I had begun one on Galatians; but while intent on this, I was interrupted by troubles of a new and heretofore unheard-of kind which must have been aroused by some avenging Fury. The *Apologia* in which I reply to Latomus' dialogue hardly cost me three days, for I was not prepared to spend much effort on such worthless stuff. If he has leisure to publish several books of the kind, there will be no lack of people to reply; like Veianius, I retire from

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3 action for specific performance] To oblige a man who has broken his contract to meet his obligations. The Latin is *actio ex pacto.*

9 illness] Cf Epp 847:7n, 867.

12 to Antwerp] Cf Ep 934:10n.

14 Mechelen] Cf Epp 926, 927 introductions.

14 patrons] Erard de la Marck (cf Ep 783); Philip of Burgundy (cf Ep 603); Adolph of Burgundy, heer van Veere (cf Ep 93).

16 assailed] Cf Ep 941:3n.

20 Galatians] Cf Ep 956.

21 troubles] Cf Ep 930:12n.

22 *Apologia]* Cf Ep 934 introduction.

25 Veianius] A retired gladiator in Horace *Epistles* 1.1.4

the arena. I perceive that this serpent cannot be overcome by fighting back; and so I have said farewell to warfare and am taking shelter in the harbour of Christian gentleness, consoling myself in face of hostile critics with the opinions formed of me by men of good will and with a good conscience, at least as far as this business is concerned. Desire for money has never possessed my mind; the burden of reputation I will gladly lay down if I can. I am not tired of life, nor do I desire it; whenever Christ, my commanding officer, calls me hence, I shall willingly and promptly leave my allotted post in the body, in reliance on him. So tedious is the malignant ingratitude of certain persons I could name, and so strong the poison of malicious gossip that, had I not fully learnt it from the facts, I would never have believed that such mischief could arise, I will not say, among educated men, but even among human beings, although I have lived among nations and men of so many kinds.

Your letter, I suspect, was delivered to Louvain and sent on from there to Antwerp, where I was at the time; with the result that I did not see the man who brought it. My plan is to devote this month of spring weather to restoring what little strength I have of body and mind, if only I am allowed to. After that, if Christ so please, I shall attack my paraphrase, and the subject about which you are so anxious – though I shall write of it with others in mind and not my friend Borssele: I know that heart of yours and that intelligence, that zeal. You have such a spring of your own that you need not draw water from another man's cistern. There will be plenty of people to extol the authority of the pope, which I admit ought to be sacrosanct; plenty to extol the precepts of Scotus and of Thomas, of which I do not wholly disapprove either. Make it your business to instil Christ pure and simple into the minds of your flock, for that we see done by very few. I rejoice that a position has fallen to your lot in which you have a certain standing, and that at the same time you are offered material and a field in which you can do good service to Christ's flock. Blessed indeed is leisure for the pursuit of knowledge; but Plato's philosopher ought to come down to earth, for he is born for others besides himself.

Your excellent Prince Adolph seems to retain the same feelings for me still that he had when a youth. You will most easily get to know him better if you use the good offices of Pieter Zuutpene of Cassel, one of the most sincere and friendly men I have ever met. You suggest that Francis, king of France, has tried to get me to move to France on pretty generous terms; and the story is not wholly false. He did try once and again in letters from people I could

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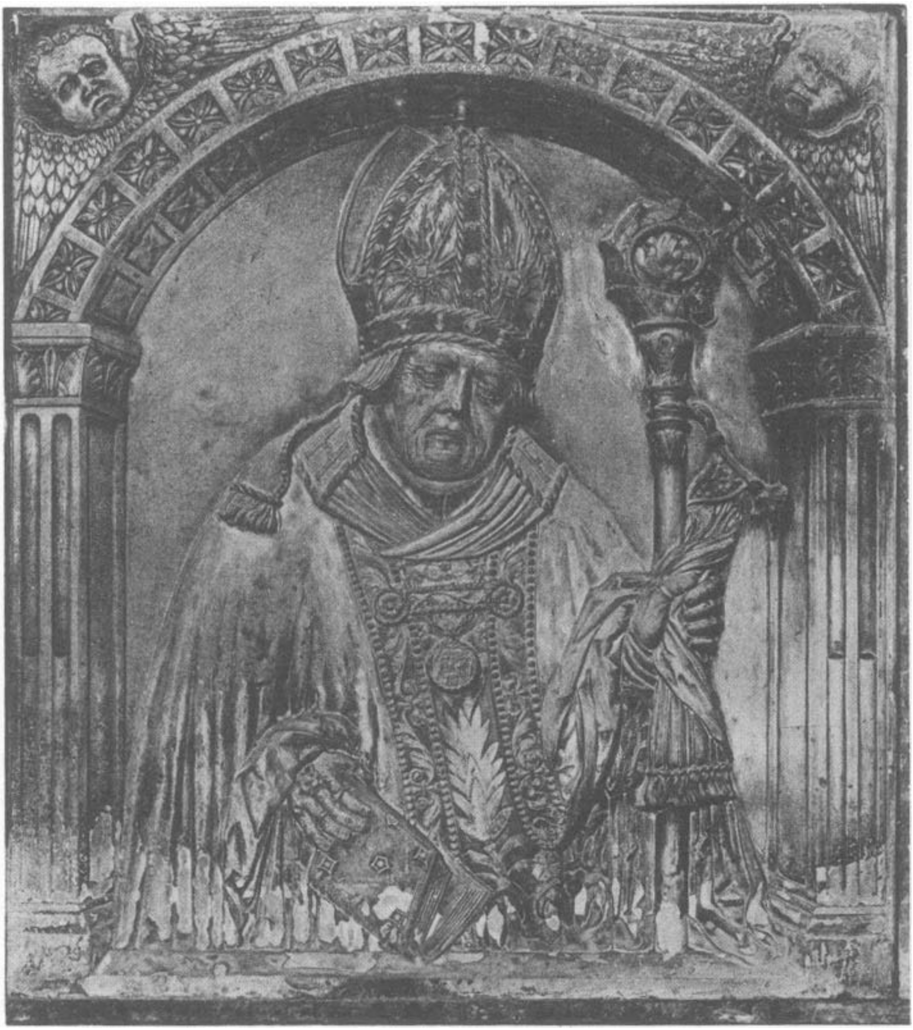
60 Zuutpene] An official of Adolph van Veere; see Ep 1005.



Johannes Fabri (Heigerlin)
Tomb sculpture in the church of St Stephen, Vienna, possibly by Loy Hering
Bildarchiv, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna

name; but as yet I have heard nothing definite in my waking moments, nor am I so inexperienced in human affairs as to be moved by mere promises. Strenuous efforts were made to get me to be tutor to Ferdinand, especially by my lord of Bergen among many others; and a better and more teachable prince one could not wish to find. But I am warned off it by certain things which cannot safely be entrusted to a letter. Farewell.

Louvain, Easter day 1519

953 / From Johannes Fabri — Constance, 26 April 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago* and answered by Ep 976. Johannes Fabri (cf Ep 386 introduction) had moved to Constance in 1517 as vicar-general to the bishop.

TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM THE EMINENT THEOLOGIAN
FROM JOHANNES FABRI, SPIRITUAL VICAR OF THE BISHOP OF
CONSTANCE, GREETING

If I have failed to write as I should for so many months, most learned Erasmus, I do not plead business as my excuse, as lazy men often do, though I could do so with perfect truth, for I really am always very busy. Nor for that matter have I forgotten my friend Erasmus, for such forgetfulness is unknown in true friendship, and I am scarcely more likely to remember my own existence than yours. Separated we may be by so many mountains and the immense stretch of travel that lies between us, yet my eyes can always rest with pleasure on your beloved offspring, the products of your more than human genius; and when I look into them, as I often do, I look upon their author, and that in a truer sense than they who greet you face to face and grasp your hand in theirs. They see the face, the physical presence, behind which the real Erasmus dwells whom all the world respects; but all those books of his give a truer account of him and a clearer picture to the eye than the continual sight of his person.

You see how zealously I strive to preserve myself from even the semblance of forgetting my friend. What then can excuse my long-continued silence? Why, the facts: you live a long way away, so that couriers were hard to come by, and your address was so uncertain. At one moment you were said to have taken wing to England; then there was a sudden rumour that

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66 tutor] See Ep 917 introduction.
67 Bergen] Jan van Bergen; cf Ep 969:7n.

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22 England] Cf Epp 886, 964 introductions.

you had gone to Holland. As a result I thought my writing would be a waste of time, and in the mean while several friends told me to wait hopefully for your return to Basel; and so I waited, in a fever of longing for you. At length by good luck I met a man at Constance who stands high in the court of Charles your king and soon, I hope, to be ours too, a noble and well read man, who kindly promised to find messengers and to do all he could – such is his wonderful courtesy towards everybody – to get a letter to you. I was delighted, and promptly set myself to write.

Do you wonder then how your friends are getting on? By the grace of God we are all flourishing, and we all wish you the very best of health, that you may enrich our low estate with more productions of that fertile genius of yours; for everything you write is of such a quality that it deserves not merely to be compared to the learning of Antiquity but to be esteemed above it. Countless are the people in Germany who meditate upon the outcome of your nightly vigils and the reflections of your genius and read them, who have made such progress in knowledge of languages, in scholarship, and in religion that now they will do great credit to you as the teacher to whom they owe it all. Countless people under your guidance have rubbed off the rust of traditional ignorance and are now making great strides towards bearing fruit, and that not only the younger ones, which I find less surprising, but the seniors too. Under such a commander-in-chief the forces of learning, as though they heard the trumpet, open war on the whole host of barbarism and hope even now for victory. Such is the irresistible force of your eloquence that you win over to your way of thinking barbarians who were given up for lost; late starters they may be, like the Phrygians, but they are exerting themselves all the same, and the valuable time they once invested in untimely frivolities they now devote to true literature and true philosophy.

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27 ours too] Cf Ep 893:39n.

27 well read man] Perhaps Maximiliaan van Bergen, heer van Zevenbergen (d 1544), whose cousin Antoon was studying in Louvain (cf Ep 969 introduction). Maximiliaan was the statesman who masterminded the election of Charles V (cf Epp 968 introduction, 986:67n) and he was at this time engaged in negotiations with the Swiss, primarily about the fate of Württemberg (cf Ep 923:27n). He was in Constance on 12 April 1519; cf A.J.G. Le Glay ed *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche* (Paris 1845) II 415. See LF III 173; L.P. Gachard and C. Piot eds *Collections des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas* (Brussels 1874–82) II 57, 66; de Vocht CTL II 462; K. Brandi *Kaiser Karl V.* new ed (Darmstadt 1959–67) I 85–6, II 107, 111.

47 Phrygians] *Adagia* I i 28

48 all the same] Reading *moliuntur tamen*

Need I mention myself? In years gone by I enjoyed your delightful society, and you so caught hold of me and transformed me that you almost made me another person. In olden days I had devoted myself to an ill-chosen course of study and adhered too strictly all my life to modern theology; but you with irresistible persuasion soon made me enjoy reading real theology more than anything else. So you will not take it amiss, for you are the mildest of men, if Beatus Rhenanus, whose integrity of learning and of life are alike conspicuous, lately dedicated your *Ratio verae theologiae* to me. True, the best and most learned of men might well have used every means to secure so distinguished a dedication; but you will be the less put to shame by his decision because I, and many others with me, were fired by you to pursue the study of ancient theology; so clearly does that short but perfect book display your learning in the Scriptures and your great powers of mind that many even among the barbarians, who used to be express opponents of a more scholarly divinity, have been won over by this brief essay and become your keen supporters.

That the New Testament newly enriched by you is a magnificent work, I do not doubt, and I look for its appearance more eagerly than ever mother did for a beloved son returning from foreign parts; for such time as can ever be spared from the tedious business of my very busy post is all devoted to reading your books ten times over. As for our friend Pace, on whom nature has lavished such gifts of body and mind, I should dearly like to know where he is and what he is doing now; I found his society singularly delightful and enjoyed it very much. So please, dear friend, forgive your old Fabri; I have given in to my love and admiration for you and not been afraid to interrupt you, burdened as you are. I welcome a letter from you as a most precious gift, yet as far as I am concerned, provided you do not cease to love me, you are at liberty not merely not to answer my letters but not to read them even, if that suits you best. Farewell, O prince of theologians and of scholars everywhere.

From Constance, 26 April AD 1519

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51 society] In Basel, 1515–16, when Fabri was the bishop's official; cf Ep 541:175.
55 take it amiss] Cf Epp 745 introduction, 976:18n.
66 New Testament] Cf Ep 864 introduction.
72 society] At Constance in 1517; cf Epp 619 introduction, 776:4n.

954 / To Guillaume Budé [Louvain, April] 1519

This letter, published in the *Farrago*, answers both Epp 924 and 929 and is answered by Ep 987.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND BUDÉ, GREETING

I have to thank you for two letters on roughly the same subject, but such as to make it clear to me that our previous disagreement has been carried on so far without any breach of the friendship between us. I am dissatisfied with that long letter of mine for this reason more than any other, that it seemed to have hurt your feelings; and you are obliged now to take a more kindly view of it, seeing that you are responsible for its survival, after I myself had condemned it to execution. I pray that your mission may be successful, and that you will at last find yourself in favour at court and be the better for it. When I consider these disturbances about electing an emperor, that line of Horace comes into my mind about the unwisdom of princes and their people.

Farewell. 1519

955 / To Maarten Lips [Louvain, c end of April 1519]

This letter is known only from the Brussels manuscript (cf Ep 750 introduction), where Lips explains in his argument that Erasmus had gone to Antwerp (cf Ep 934:10n) to publish his *Apologia* against Latomus and called on Lips after his return. On this occasion he promised Lips a copy of the recently arrived second edition of the New Testament, which was promptly delivered, together with this note, by Erasmus' servant, Johannes Hovius. From Ep 961:12, 74–6 it appears that the first copies of the New Testament arrived in Louvain very shortly before 1 May.

Greetings. Examine the book and make sure it's complete. As for the money, whatever you think best. It shall either be sent back or kept at your disposal or spent on books of your own choice. Farewell, dearest Maarten.

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4 breach of the friendship] Cf Epp 896, 906 salutations.

5 letter of mine] Ep 906

7 condemned it] Cf Ep 906 postscript.

10 electing an emperor] The words are in Greek; Erasmus adds, also in Greek, a phrase from Horace *Epistles* 1.2.8, where Homer is said to depict the folly of princes and peoples alike, with the common people paying the bill. For the flurry of diplomatic activity preceding the election cf the preface to this volume.

955

1 money] Cf Ep 934:2n.

956 / To Antoine de la Marck [Louvain, c end of April 1519]

This is the preface to the *Paraphrasis in Galatas,* first published by Martens (Louvain May 1519; NK 845). Work on the new paraphrase began soon after that on Corinthians was published in February (cf Ep 916 introduction) with a dedication to Erard de la Marck, Antoine's uncle, but the troubles in Louvain caused delays (cf Epp 930:12n, 952:19–22; LB IX 112A). On 24 April work still remained to be done on the manuscript or the proofs (cf Ep 952:44), but on 25 May distribution had begun (cf Ep 974). The *Paraphrasis in Galatas* was reprinted by Froben (Basel August 1519), by V. Schumann (Leipzig 1519), and by Johann Prüss (Strasbourg March 1520). Thereafter it appeared regularly in conjunction with paraphrases on the other Epistles. Allen found this preface for the last time in two Froben editions of 1522. Erasmus' reason for dropping it afterwards was probably his embarrassment with Antoine's life and politics.

Antoine (c 1495–1528) was a son of the powerful Robert de la Marck. Among his benefices was the Cluniac abbey of Beaulieu-en-Argonne, south-west of Verdun (from 1507), which owned enough land to rank as a county. Antoine followed the political moves of his father, who sided in turns with France and with the government of Brussels (cf Ep 748:29n). But after the failure of attempts to put him in the place of his uncle, the bishop of Liège, he broke away again from the French alliance in 1525. In the name of Charles V he undertook a campaign into Champagne in 1527 and finally died in the fighting when the duke of Guise besieged and sacked his abbey; see P. Harsin *Recueil d'études* (Liège 1970) 163–7.

TO THE HONOURABLE COUNT ANTOINE DE LA MARCK FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

After I had set my hand to a paraphrase on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, I was looking round from time to time for some person to whom I could dedicate the work, since this practice has lasted from early times down to our own day. At that moment your devoted admirer Paschasius Berselius brought me a letter from your Highness, which gave me a clear picture of an upright and lofty spirit, full worthy of your distinguished lineage, and of a fiery nature born for the study of that sublime philosophy which summons us to the contemplation of heavenly things and breeds contempt for those inferior objects which catch the attention of the vulgar crowd.

This gave me great pleasure, though it was no surprise, especially when I recalled the gifts of your father, Robert, a warrior to be compared in

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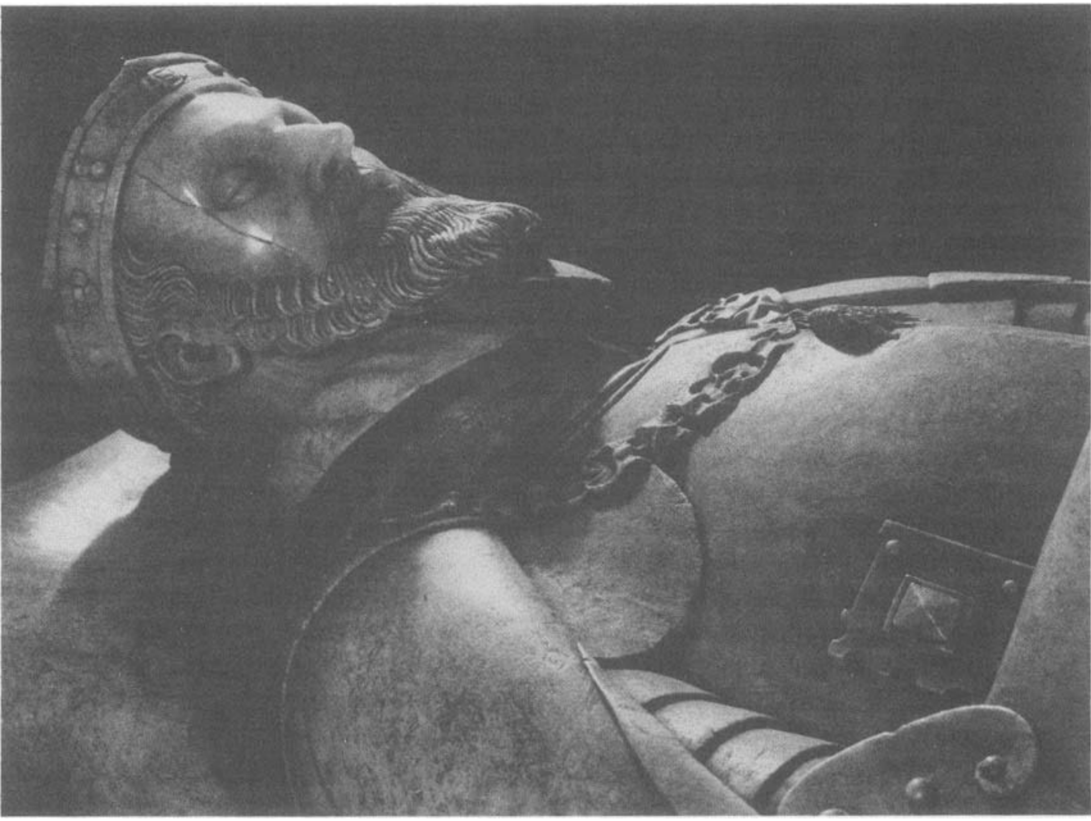
6 Berselius] Cf Ep 926:19–24.



Charles de Croy (d 1527)
Funeral monument at Chimay
Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Brussels
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military prowess with a Scipio or a Pyrrhus, and the character of your noble mother, who so resembled her excellent brother the prince of Chimay that it was not kinship so much as rivalry in all the virtues proved her his sister; and then that incomparable prelate the prince bishop of Liège, your uncle, to whom I dedicated the last volume of my paraphrase. Henceforward, surely, priests and even monks will be ashamed to spend their days in luxury and sloth, in games of chance and other sordid pleasures, when you with your exalted birth and your great fortune, in the flower of youth (for you are barely four and twenty), think nothing more important, more pleasant, or more glorious than to devote your time to liberal studies and honourable accomplishments, and recall the most famous of historic princes? Well done, O noble youth: keep on your course, adding a glorious lustre by such pursuits to a lineage already distinguished in its own right and spurring on other young men of great family to pursue honourable studies, as some of them are already inclined to do of their own accord.

Your Lordship would, I suppose, have been satisfied, had I repaid your letter with a letter of my own; and now here is a book to keep my letter company, which I will not recommend to your approval, but I hope to see all men approve it for your sake. The subject may seem somewhat remote from our own time; but in it you can see how far a wise man may praise himself sometimes without offence; how much weight we should give to human authority; how little to ceremonies, and how great the danger to true religion if men trust in ceremonies overmuch. In this Epistle is to be found the famous problem, never, I think, solved by any of the Ancients, out of which rose the well-known dispute between Jerome and Augustine about lying. I have pointed out this still unsolved problem rather than explained it. Here indeed is a worthy subject for the exercise of all your mental force and power.

Farewell, noble young man. I shall count this a most fortunate omen for

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15 mother] Catherine de Croy (cf Ep 748:29n); her brother was Charles de Croy (d 1527), first prince of Chimay, knight of the Golden Fleece in 1491. Until 1509 he preceded Chièvres, his kinsman, as the first guardian in charge of Prince Charles.

39 problem] In Gal 2:11–14 a clash is reported between Paul and Cephas over the correct attitude of Judaeo-Christians towards their brethren recruited from the gentiles. Paul accused Cephas and his friends of timidly abandoning the truth of the Gospel. Erasmus, like Jerome in his commentary (PL 26:363–8) and Augustine (Ep 28), who criticized Jerome, followed a reading which put Peter's name in the place of Cephas'. In the New Testament (cf LB VI 807–10) Erasmus devoted to the problem a long note that was critical of Augustine. In the paraphrase (cf LB VII 949–50) he reported Paul's narrative with some amplification, explaining that Peter used deliberate dissimulation and that his purpose was pious but short-sighted; cf Epp 778:270n, 974:5–7.

our friendship if I find that you give this book a cheerful welcome and read it all through with alacrity.

957 / To Guillaume de Croy — Louvain, [c May 1519]

Epp 957–9 were published together in the *Farrago* of October 1519. Presumably they followed one another at short intervals, and from a comparison between Ep 945:11–14 and Ep 957:138–42 and between Ep 945:8–10 and Ep 959:41–3 it can be gathered that the present exchange of letters was somewhat later, but not much. The philosophical argument treated in these three letters is unusual given Erasmus' dominant preoccupations in this period, but it bears a close relation to the concerns of Croy's tutor, Juan Luis Vives, whose influence may be detected in the Stoic stance of his pupil's letter, especially in the heavy reliance on the concept of virtue (Ep 958; cf C.G. Noreña *Juan Luis Vives,* The Hague 1970, 203–4). Erasmus later perceived Vives to have outgrown this prevalent commitment to the problems and methods of classical philosophy and welcomed this development, which he may have helped to bring about; cf Ep 1082.

TO THE MOST REVEREND GUILLAUME DE CROY CARDINAL AND
ARCHBISHOP OF TOLEDO FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM,
GREETING

It is not very far from the truth, most reverend Prelate and most excellent Prince, to hold with the ancient Stoics that the sum of human felicity lies in the regular practice of virtue; yet it seems to me that the ordinary opinions of men and their ordinary life are closer to the doctrine of the Peripatetics, who think that happiness is a circle which can only be complete if three orders of blessings concur among themselves and give each other mutual aid and support. Of these, what are called the blessings of the mind deserve, on the one hand, more than any others to be called good things, and contribute most to the sum of felicity, yet on the other hand they are mostly to be obtained by our own industry and forethought; so that we owe the chief part of our happiness to no one after God except ourselves, in so far as we can be said to owe ourselves anything. As for the gifts of nature, since they befall us, as it were, in our sleep without effort on our part, in my opinion we are not so much blessed in them as fortunate, although these too can be

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7 Peripatetics] Cf Plato *Euthydemus* 279A–C, *Philebus* 48E, *Laws* 743E; Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1098b; Thomas Aquinas *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics* trans C.I. Litzinger (Chicago 1964) I 64–5.

preserved and even increased by forethought and taking pains. Demosthenes, for instance, though he had a weak voice and was short of breath, and besides that had an impediment in his speech and an unattractive appearance, which in a public speaker carries no little weight, yet by assiduous care and practice conquered all these difficulties. Cicero so built up his otherwise indifferent health by careful management of exercise and diet that he proved a match for great exertions, and that to an advanced age. As for worldly advantages, which are like tools for the achievement or exercise of virtue, they come to most men late in life. For in securing honours or wealth or fame and position many use up almost their whole lives, so that by great and long-continued cares they seem to achieve nothing, except to be rich or titled on their death-beds. As a result they get little good from their own blessings and are very little use to other people.

On this score your Eminence always seems to me to be exceptionally fortunate, since all the gifts of nature and the favours of fortune have come to you unasked, and plentiful, and early, so that you can enjoy your advantages for a very long time and be the greatest blessing to your fellow-men. Apart from your intellectual gifts, apart from a bodily frame excellently moulded and fashioned for the whole practice and pursuit of virtue, such is the authority, and such the dignity and wealth conferred upon you by the generous favour of the Holy See and the more than fatherly affection of your uncle the prince of Chièvres, that one would scarcely wish more, nor is any exalted dignity yet wanting, except what could be wished for one man alone. Others therefore have many struggles before them, if they would win their way to the summit of felicity; but you, who have all else in abundance, have but one object and one purpose still before you: to go on as you do now and win spiritual distinctions worthy of the greatness of your fortune. These alone are not lavished by kindly nature or indulgent fortune; they must be bought with toil and sweat. This is the only price at which the heavenly powers are willing that this commodity should be on sale to mortal men, and even kings and sultans have to pay it.

For he who crowns a king does not install in him a kingly mind. Nobility of birth and the plaudits of his people may make a man emperor; a spirit worthy of empire is not theirs to give, and yet, if this is lacking, they who conferred the honour imposed a burden, not a dignity. True dignity of an admirable and exalted kind arises when, and only when, the distinctions

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18 Demosthenes] Cf Plutarch *Demosthenes* 6.3, 11–7.
22 Cicero] Cf Plutarch *Cicero* 3.4–5, 8.2–3.
39 Chièvres] Guillaume de Croy; cf Epp 532:30n, 628:69–72.
41 for one man alone] Presumably a tactful reference to the papacy

of nature and fortune add lustre to gifts of the mind in such a way that they themselves receive light in their turn, or rather, if it be possible, are put in the shade. That man alone is truly great, whose greatness remains even if his crown is taken from him. Many are debarred by lowly birth or 'straitened means at home' from the struggle to achieve those admirable virtues which fall to the lot of none save the few 'welcomed by favouring Jove,' or if they reach the goal, they do not possess the same power to improve the lot of other men by doing good. And yet suppose there were a man dowered beyond all others with all the gifts of all the gods, as once Pandora was, and not unworthy of this galaxy of all good things; such a one seems to me to have a colour of deity about him, for he is sent by the powers above on purpose that he may diffuse his munificence over all men far and wide. This duty he will perform if, first, he recognizes his endowments – for some there are, as the great poet says, who know not their good fortune – and, secondly, if he remembers that, whatever his endowments are, all is the Lord's; all is entrusted to him that by being spent for the good of his fellow men it may earn the Lord a plentiful return, who of this kind of profit can never have enough. But the prime thing needful is a lofty spirit, which looks down on those trifles which the common herd admire and can no more be bent from the path of honour than a wall of bronze. Let such be the constant rule he follows: let him devote the whole arsenal of his felicity to the common good; for the Ancients rightly held it to be above all the peculiar function of deity to aid mortal man.

And needs must they approach most closely to this ideal who are placed by the favour of the eternal deity on that pinnacle of society where you find yourself. It will add spurs to his resolution if a man remembers that he is placed as it were in a vast theatre, with the eyes of the whole world bent on him alone; that it is expected of him that he should nothing common do or mean; that whatever he says or does will be seized upon as an example. If an actor considers anxiously how he can prove equal to the part he has undertaken and the audience before which he plays, how much more must the great ones of the earth feel it their responsibility to answer the world's expectations and their own high place! The more honours Fortune has bestowed upon you, the harder must you strive that the profit may be worthy of the capital at stake. There is no concealing what is expected of an abbot, of

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57 'straitened means at home'] Juvenal 3.165

59 'welcomed by favouring Jove'] Virgil *Aeneid* 6.129, 130

67 poet says] Cf Virgil *Georgics* 2.458

73 wall of bronze] Cf Horace *Epistles* 1.1.60; the notion of bending the wall, however, is new.

an archbishop, of a cardinal, of one whose ancestry and honours are so brilliant – in short, of a true leader. It is not such a great thing to succeed to very high station; when you have succeeded, to maintain and support it is the most difficult thing in the world. It has been rightly said that it is sometimes better to deserve distinction than to be given it. Best of all, I believe, is to achieve great place without ambition, and when you have reached it, to meet all its demands in such a way that it does not so much shed lustre on you, as you on it. A large part in the making of a great prince is certainly the wish to be a good one. And if ever there was reason to hope for this from anyone, it is you who have shown yourself in many ways so full of splendid promise, that all of us not without good reason are full of confidence in your future.

Your Eminence has already given us in many indications a fair sample of your qualities; still greater things are promised by your virtues and your natural gifts, as yet so to speak in the blade, but daily growing up and hastening to maturity. And another thing: although a nursery of virtue has been implanted in you by Nature, a power (I must admit) of exceptional force, yet it makes no small contribution to have always round one, in council, in office, and in familiar conversation, men who are intelligent, honourable, educated, and wise. Even more important is it to do as you do and practise actively all through one's life the reading of the best authors, especially such as can give encouragement or guidance in acting the part of a virtuous prince; though we see some great princes gain an added distinction from learning in subjects by no means their own, as Mithridates from his skill in languages and medicine and Gaius Caesar from his knowledge of astrology. Much help comes from one's friends, but from none more than from good books, which Cato used to carry with him as his companions into the actual Senate-house, and read something in the intervals while the senate was assembling. No prince needs a complete knowledge of every subject, and there are far too many books for him to find time to read them all. In both fields he must learn in the first place what is most important and what comes closest to his business as a prince. For it would be unwise in a man born for public affairs to gather dust by constant meditation in the company of what they call dumb teachers; on the contrary, just as Plato moulds the

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112 Mithridates] This king of Pontus in the first century BC could speak twenty-two languages fluently and was an expert in the antidotes of poison: Gellius 17.16–17; cf LB I 541F.

113 Caesar] Cf Plutarch *Caesar* 59.

115 Cato] Cf LB IV 731C; Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 19.

122 dumb teachers] Cf *Adagia* I ii 18.

122 Plato] Cf *Republic* 3, especially 411–12.

spirit of his citizens by a judicious mixture of music and gymnastics, so the lives of great men should be kept in balance by interchanging leisure for study and the business of public affairs.

But I am carried away, forgetting that I am writing a letter, and that to so excellent a prince, wise enough to need no advice from me, fortunate enough to deserve all my felicitations. But it was a pleasure to dwell upon the thought of your great qualities, who as a prelate are one of the chief ornaments of this generation, and I pray that they may continually increase, so that we may constantly have new reasons for rejoicing with you, while you daily become even greater and better than you were before. That you should practise speaking and writing alternately is, I think, an excellent plan; and so I have the more readily done as you asked, though in other ways much pressed with business, in order to provoke you to an answer. I send your Eminence a letter ill written on two counts and I fear tedious on a third, for it is as long as it is shapeless. But on this point you must not be hard on me, for you brought this Arabian piper on your own head. If you will do me the honour of adding the name of Erasmus to the list of your humble servants, I in return will ensure you a special place in my list of Williams, for I notice that some destiny associates this name in my experience with friendship and good omen. It would take too long to name them all; but you will, I think, not be sorry to find yourself classed with William, archbishop of Canterbury, with William Mountjoy, with William Budé. If there is anything in which your Eminence may find me of the slightest service, pray give your instructions to a man who greatly desires to please you. My respectful duty to your Lordship.

From Louvain

958 / From Guillaume de Croy Louvain, [c May 1519]

For this letter, published in the *Farrago,* see Ep 957 introduction.

GUILLAUME DE CROY, CARDINAL, TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

I have your letter, my dear Erasmus, but in what words to extol it I simply do not know, such are its elegance and its learning, so characteristic of you and of all your letters. If I am to answer it, you must please grant me one thing: you must not mind if, while my views are the same as yours, my expression is

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138 Arabian piper] Cf *Adagia* I vii 32; the Arabian pipers did not know when to stop.
140 list of Williams] Cf Ep 534:33–54; Bietenholz *History and Biography* 60–1.

very different. I will do what Glaucon does in Plato, when he dispraises justice in order to rouse all the eloquence of Socrates to praise it as one of the great virtues. When you come as though by definite stages to speak of the felicity of the soul, you seem to approve the Peripatetic doctrine of the good life, rather than the Stoic view, and assert that it agrees better both with the general feeling of mankind and with the facts of life. If however this criterion has any force in establishing the theory of human happiness, Epicureanism will easily vanquish all its rivals, having such popular appeal that the section of mankind which thinks us born solely for pleasure is much the largest. Yet you are not much moved, I notice, by the numbers of the cobblers, tailors, cooks, butchers, and other tradesmen, but seek your evidence from the oustanding men who, with their supreme endowments of intellect and learning, are not carried aimlessly this way and that (I mean, wherever profit and pleasure may drive them), but stand above the chances of human life, beyond the reach of disturbing emotions, and see things clearly as they really are, piercing, as they say, to the quick. How these men argue will repay examination; and let us approach it, in Stoic fashion, with a little more subtlety. Do not be surprised if I bring to this discussion absolutely none of that popular and florid eloquence appropriate to the courts, which would be beyond my reach even were I praising pleasure before a popular audience; for we are not all like Erasmus, who can write of great things and make them seem familiar, of small things and make them seem sublime, of dark things and make them lucid, of paradoxes and make them perfectly probable.

But to return to my subject, if wealth and possessions and health and strength and good looks and all other bodily and external good things, as you call them, make some contribution to felicity itself, the greater these are, the fuller and more eminent must be the state of happiness that they produce, so that a man who is handsome and rich is far happier than one who is poor and ugly. If you add wealth, possessions, honours, influence, power, friends, lineage, physical strength, fleetness of foot, how many parasangs behind him in the race towards happiness he will leave the good man who is without these things! It will be clear that Socrates, that deity of our philosophers, with all his famous virtue has advanced scarcely one step towards happiness. To say this is almost impious: for if these things taken singly make some contribution towards blessedness, all together they will have such

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7 Plato] Cf *Republic* 2.358–62.

22 as they say] Cf *Adagia* II iv 13.

37 parasangs] The Persian measure of distance; cf *Adagia* II iii 82.

immediate effect that the man who possesses them will be more blessed than the good man deprived of them; and thus it may prove easy to call that brutal tyrant Nero more blessed than Epictetus, the Stoic slave who is such a favourite with gods and mortals. Pray relieve Socrates of his famous physical ugliness, his lowly birth, his railing wife, his poverty and lack of means; give him good looks and pedigree and a devoted helpmeet, and endow him with wealth and the highest honours; and what will you find in your new Socrates grander or more exalted or more admirable than was in your old one?

What say you, Erasmus my prince of scholars? Wealth is a blessing; so are beauty and physical strength; why then was no man ever made better by them? Cicero, who was as expert in the sense of Latin words as anyone in Rome, the Latin capital, itself, expresses surprise, as you know, that possessions were called 'goods' in early Rome, although nothing could be less so, nor is the word really suitable to that particular thing. Think you that some most worthless dross of gold or silver, that silken garments and tapestries and splendid mansions add much to happiness? So that if human luxury had never invented such things, no man would have been perfectly happy? Do you consider beauty – a complexion, say, blended of white and red – is part of blessedness? Then is no Ethiop ever blessed? Not one, in our view, if we judge blessedness by this, and none of us on their view, assuming that they judge by the same standards as we do, a vulgar standard suited to the coarse tastes of the mob. And to draw an example from the Scriptures, as befits both of us, me as a bishop and you as their most diligent and honest expositor, what thrones, what riches can you add to Christ to make him more blessed than he was in the world?

But let us say no more of this, for God himself is king of kings, as he always was, and lord of lords. Peter, at any rate, boasts that he has neither gold nor silver. Be careful, Peter! Why deprive yourself of no small part of felicity? Bestow on Paul the Roman empire – I mean that same Paul who says that he rejoices in adversity (so men call it) and in defeat: will you get a happier, greater, more admirable Paul? Are you prepared to adopt Quin-

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45 Epictetus] Epictetus of Hierapolis (Phrygia), c 50–120, was a slave and one of the last important representatives of the Stoic school. Some of his teachings are perhaps influenced by and certainly compatible with Christian thought.

54 Cicero] *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 7

70 Peter] Acts 3:6

72 Paul] Rom 5:3

74 Quintilian's phrase] The quotation comes from Quintilian's second declamation, *Caecus in limine*, rather than from the first, *Paries palmatus;* the error was corrected in the *Epistolae ad diversos*, 1521.

tilian's phrase in the *Paries palmatus*, 'Those whom their virtues have made unhappy'? Be in no hurry to call them unhappy whom Christ (who is truth itself) declares to be blessed when the moment comes that men persecute them for his sake. I wanted to have this discussion with you, if you do not mind, to give myself some practice in this subject; but I have not ranged so widely in this field as to forget that this is a letter I am writing. So please take this practice effort of mine in good part.

I pass on to other sections of your truly delightful letter. In the second place, you set my duty before me, Peripatetic as you are, in terms such as could hardly be expected from Zeno of Citium himself. Please send me such precepts often, so that under your tuition I may know how I am to behave. For though I am not one of the highest and best class of men – those who know everything themselves – I would much the most willingly belong to the next class, those who follow good advice when they are given it. And I hope to live my life in such a way as to maintain my own honour and my dearest uncle's, whose affection for me you have rightly called greater than a father's. He could not show such intimate feeling for me, though he were my father twice over; and I confess I owe him more than I could to a most generous uncle and father rolled into one. As for scholarship, what I should like most of all, if it were possible, would be to complete the all-round knowledge in Greek they speak so much of; if a heavy load of business makes that impossible, at least, as you advise, I will devote myself to liberal subjects and those to which I have a natural inclination of my own accord, to the more humane Muses, to elegance in Latin and, up to a point, in Greek, and to philosophy of the kind that Socrates brought into the cities and the homes of men – ethics they call it – which has always seemed to me far the most useful for the conduct of public affairs.

Now I wish to review a few words in your letter: 'But I am carried away, forgetting that I am writing a letter, and that to so excellent a prince!' Of this at least you are oblivious, dearest Erasmus, that you write to a man to whom you could send a letter longer than the whole *Iliad*, and still not satisfy his appetite for reading you or do away with the pleasure he finds in hearing your news – in fact, you would continually increase it. As for what you say about my humble servants, there is no call for you to use such words in addressing me. Call yourself a fellow-worker in my studies, or rather, call yourself the

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76 Christ] Matt 5:11

84 Zeno] C 334–263 BC, the founder of the Stoic school

86 class of men] Hesiod *Works and Days* 293–5, cited by Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.4.7; Allen detected that Croy is using the Latin version of the *Ethics* by Johannes Argyropoulos; cf Ep 456:106n.

94 all-round knowledge] Quintilian 1.10.1

teacher and me the pupil. And as regards your Williams, I like to think that I am blessed with a name that is so congenial to you; nor shall I ever be sorry to be joined in any way with a man of such eminence and so perfect in excellence of every sort as William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, or as that distinguished and active nobleman Lord Mountjoy, of both of whom you always speak so highly and about whose merits I have heard so much from almost everyone that I could not be induced to suppose them other than men of the very highest quality. What can I say of Guillaume Budé, the chosen darling of the Muses both Greek and Latin? For my dear Vives never tires of singing his praises; and his researches, his published work, his natural gifts and learning and eloquence and character I respect, admire, and venerate with reverence and wonder. I would much rather you enrolled me in their company than among the wealthiest magnates of any other description.

Farewell, dearest Erasmus, and forgive my loquacity; and as soon as you have the time, send me a reply. Since I thought you might find my writing rather hard to read, I have employed a secretary.

Louvain, [1518]

959 / To Guillaume de Croy Louvain, [c May 1519]

For this letter, published in the *Farrago*, see Ep 957 introduction.

TO HIS MOST REVEREND LORD GUILLAUME DE CROY, CARDINAL AND ARCHBISHOP OF TOLEDO, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Most reverend Lord Archbishop and most illustrious Prince, in my last letter I said in jest that I was afraid you had set an Arabian piper on your trail. Now it is the other way round, and the same thing seems to have happened to me, so careful are you to answer every point in that letter, long as it was, and moreover you drag me by the scruff of the neck into a very wide field of philosophical discussion, starting a topic that might fill more than one volume. Had I not convinced myself that your Eminence can turn your mind to anything, I should wonder a little whether in writing as you do you had some sophist at your elbow; such is the skill you show in distorting some things and turning them to a purpose at which they were not aimed. For the moment, I will not engage with you in a pitched battle but will touch on a few

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5 Arabian piper] Cf Ep 957:138n.

8 by the scruff of the neck] Cf *Adagia* IV ix 50.

points in few words, not losing sight of the fact that I am writing a letter. Furthermore, when you assert that, however you may have argued, you think as I do, I likewise cannot fail to think as you do, however I may have argued myself. In the same way, they say, the Peripatetics agree with the Stoics as to the facts and differ only in their language and their system of laying down the law. In fact, though their teaching is the same, I prefer Peripatetics to Stoics for this reason, that the Stoics employ paradoxical arguments so far removed from common life and experience, while the Peripatetics bring themselves down more, as it were, to the level of popular understanding, though they have the same object in view as the Stoics. In the same way, Plato wishes his wise man to descend from the marvellous light of those things which really exist into the shadows with the common crowd, so that he may be of more use to them; and in the same way eternal wisdom speaks to us nearly everywhere as children. It by no means follows that whatever satisfies the lowest class of men must be the best; you distort your argument in this direction, but with more force than fitness. Who would be impressed if some Stoic were to proclaim that kingship, riches, and good health are not blessings at all, and on the contrary that slavery, poverty, sickness, old age, and death are no kind of ills, because perfect felicity is to be found in some state of being he calls wisdom? These arguments at least cut no ice even with educated men, and to the commonalty they are just ridiculous. If however a man were to say that these things are by no means to be anxiously pursued, but that, should they fall to one's lot, they must be turned into opportunities and materials for virtue, his words will fall more acceptably upon the ears and enter the minds, not of the cobblers and tailors and cooks of whom you speak, but of magistrates and princes and bishops and (I will add) even theologians; for on this point I do not believe Latomus would differ from me, however much he is thought to differ in the business of the ancient tongues. Not that the common people necessarily approve what they follow in herds; everyone condemns dishonourable pleasures, no one has a good word for drunkenness. I am thinking of their settled opinions, not of their appetites or their mental aberrations.

But (not to be long-winded) your first argument runs like this: if physical and worldly advantages are blessings, then the more plentifully they fall to one's lot, the happier they must make one. In the first place, your Eminence must remember that this class of blessings, however much one may pile one on another, does not bring happiness, but when added they perfect the happiness that virtue alone can give, at least as concerns the

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25 Plato] Cf *Republic* 7.519–20.

42 Latomus] Cf Epp 934, 945 introductions.

active exercise of virtue. Secondly, although the things you speak of contribute to felicity, it does not immediately follow that felicity increases in the same proportion as they do. Food and drink conduce to the maintenance of man's life, but it does not follow that he has most life who eats most. Apart from wisdom alone, there is nothing in human affairs so advantageous that it does not become the opposite when present in excess. Moderate beauty has helped many people on their way; excessive beauty has been the ruin of many. Pythagoras, Scipio Africanus, the emperor Trajan derived not a little of their authority from the nobility of their appearance. And then you think a man almost impious who would suppose Socrates happier even by a hair's breadth if some god had added to his gifts of mind good looks and wealth and noble birth. If nothing else, we shall find he can do good to more people. Now it is virtue's purpose to spread its blessings over many men; but the virtue of Socrates benefited very few of his fellow-citizens and was disastrous to himself. To measure how many parasangs ahead the man is who is thus equipped is not for me; I am satisfied if he gets some increase in happiness. Again, it is proper to weigh these blessings and not count them, as you do when you make virtue deprived of these things scarcely one step towards felicity. Virtue is the only thing of such importance that even by itself it can achieve felicity and stands so far above blessings of every other kind that they are not even admitted into the class of blessings except in so far as they are in the service of virtue. All this makes it sufficiently clear that in this context it is off the point to compare Nero, the most infamous of tyrants, and Epictetus, the most upright of philosophers. It is true that Nero's power and riches were no help to save him from ill fortune; but had that excellent man Epictetus been given these advantages, he would have been not a little better equipped for the exercise of virtue.

On this you argue as follows: if they are blessings, why does their support make no man better? In the first place, if a man has wealth that was left him by his forbears or honourably acquired in some other way and expends it on relieving the poor or some more pious use for riches, if there is one, does not that wealth support him in a process of daily self-improvement? Or are we not to suppose that an addition of virtuous acts adds something also to a man's standing in virtue? Secondly, it has not escaped you as a man of intelligence that wealth, beauty, good health, and other blessings of the kind are called blessings in a different sense than virtue. We call these blessings much as we call royal heralds kings because kings are their masters. What the Stoics perhaps would call advantages, the

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89 heralds kings] Addressed with the name of the royal house whose colours they wear. In English the expression 'king-at-arms' has survived.

Peripatetics, using the word in a wider sense, call a sort of blessings. No one can make a bad use of virtue; but these gifts are misused by many people – the gifts are not to blame, the fault is theirs. Again there are some things called not disadvantages but evils by the Peripatetics, which all the same often provide materials for virtue; and perhaps more men are corrupted by poverty than by wealth in moderation. Cicero, you say, expressed surprise that in early Latin the word blessings can be applied to property; but, if I mistake not, he said this while playing the part of a Stoic philosopher. God is called good in one sense; a virtuous man, a good horse, a good coin, in other senses. Why be surprised that bodily health and strength should be called good things, when according to the philosophers the predicates of good and thing are completely applicable to both? Nor do I speak of things invented by luxury, though nothing prevents even discoveries bad in themselves from being put to good uses. It is more clever than convincing when you say that if no one is blessed unless he has a complexion blended of white and red, therefore no Ethiop is ever blessed. A person of this complexion is not ipso facto handsome, nor is there any reason why an Ethiop among Ethiops should not be handsome just because of his colour. If nothing can be added to Christ, why is he so often asking something of his Father? Why does he exult that power should be given him in heaven and in earth?

But let us not bring Christ into this discussion, if you so prefer. The fact that he wished the apostles to be poor does not prove that riches are bad; he did not wish the glory of his gospel to be ascribed to worldly advantages. Nor do I deny that the moment often comes when such advantages must be abandoned, if religion so requires.

Now answer me in your turn. If these are not blessings, how can we ask for them even in public worship from him who neither will nor can give us anything that is not good? Heaven forbid that we should call unfortunate those who are endowed with virtue; of course we call them truly blessed but think their blessedness is more complete if they possess the things of which we speak, whether freely given them or won by honourable means, unless circumstances demand something different.

I will give over my philosophizing if your Eminence will answer me one more small question. Imagine two men. One of them as ugly as Thersites and as poor as Irus, in pitiful health, defective in speech, with a useless memory and wits of lead, of disreputable origin, universally unpopular, banished from his country, old, and decrepit. The other in the flower of his age, of

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96 Cicero] Cf Ep 958:54.

124 Thersites ... Irus] Thersites is ugliness personified (cf *Adagia* IV iii 80); for the proverbial poverty of Irus cf *Adagia* I vi 76.

noble and impressive appearance, in perfect health, a clear and ready speaker, with a reliable memory and a nimble wit, rich, powerful, well born, and universally respected for his high station. Imagine that all this time you have a mind worthy of an honourable man, which above all loves what is best and after that desires to do as much good as he can to all men; and that there is beside you some deity who bids you choose which of these you prefer, for you will henceforth be what you have chosen. Tell me in honesty, which will you choose? And do you think the good man's choice unworthy of the name of good? I know you will retort 'If these are good things, why are we bidden to despise them?' That man despises them who thinks them nothing worth compared with virtue, who puts no trust in them, who does not hold them for his own enjoyment, who shares them generously, who does not grieve when they are taken from him, if Fortune one day asks for the return of what is really hers. The man is not blessed who thinks he owes his blessedness only to them. He is not blessed who ceases to be blessed when deprived of them.

But enough of philosophy; 'Acorns have had their day.' If your Highness is willing to take advice even from me, I am bound to admire your modesty of spirit, which even such a splendid position could not spoil – not but what I have spoken as I have not so much from a desire to put you right as to provoke you to practise your pen. The feeling that you show for the subjects worthy of a great prince gives you, I think, a better claim to felicity than your red hat itself, exalted as it is. If your modesty rejects the notion of me as your humble servant, I leave you free to call me by what name you will, as long as you count me among your devoted supporters. And as you with your accustomed courtesy do not despise the company of those three other Williams, so I do not doubt of their rejoicing when you join them and put them in the shade, if so it can be called, and not rather to make them more distinguished by the splendour that you bring with you. I have stolen a brief hour or two in order not to seem wholly unconscious of my duty. Shortly, I hope, it will be possible to bear witness on a larger scale to my feelings towards your Highness, for whose continual prosperity I tender my best wishes.

Louvain, [1518]

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144 'Acorns ... day'] A Greek proverb, supposed to refer to the use of acorns in the early days as food, before cereal crops were developed; cf *Adagia* I iv 2.

960 / To Maarten Lips [Louvain, c March–May 1519]

This letter is known only from Lips' two copy books (cf Ep 750 introduction). In the Brussels manuscript he added an argument to the text, telling how Edward Lee had asked him for numerous lettters he had written to Lips under the pretext that he needed a reference. Subsequently these letters were not returned at the stipulated time. The argument further mentions how Lee had told Lips that Briart (d 8 January 1520) was prohibiting the sale of Erasmus' *Apologia*, of which a copy accompanied this note. As so often in the correspondence between Erasmus and Lips the circumstances and the date must be inferred. From Ep 922:34–5 it was learnt that Lee was no longer writing to Lips. With the friendly message here mentioned he was apparently attempting to get back his letters to Lips, who was apt to show them to Erasmus. This desire is understandable, especially after the publication of Erasmus' *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* (cf Ep 936:34n). Possibly this was the book sent by Erasmus; or it might have been Erasmus' *Apologia de laude matrimonii* which interested Briart directly; see Ep 946 introduction.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO MASTER MAARTEN LIPS OF BRUSSELS, GREETING

Lee treats you as the wolf treated the lamb. For some months I have not set eyes on him, so far am I from having had it out with him. I wish you had not given him the rest of the letters; you might have found some excuse not to. Watch your step; he will learn nothing from me, for I trust him less than the devil in person. That friendly letter was written by him for the sole reason of deluding you still further. The story about my *Apologia* is false; it has been approved by Atensis and is now on sale. I send you a copy. It is safest in this season of storms to trust no one and keep one's mouth shut. Farewell.

961 / To Lorenzo Campeggi Louvain, 1 May 1519

Lorenzo Campeggi (1474–1539), originally a professor of canon law at Bologna, entered the church as a widower and was created a bishop and in 1517 a cardinal. After other diplomatic missions he went to England as the papal legate (summer 1518–August 1519). Despite many obstacles he managed to win the confidence of Henry VIII, who made him one of his agents in Rome and in

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3 wolf] Aesop fable 155

9 Atensis] Jan Briart

10 season of storms] Cf Ep 930:12n.

1524 bishop of Salisbury. Erasmus clearly believed that the legate was in a position to influence his own aspirations for preferment in England (cf Ep 964 introduction). He wrote this letter to establish direct relations and to win a sympathetic ear. He continued to praise Campeggi along with Wolsey (cf Epp 968:15, 970, 990), and he dedicated his *Paraphrasis in Ephesios* to him in February 1520 (cf Ep 1062). By that time the present letter, together with Campeggi's answer, Ep 995, was already published in Erasmus' *Farrago*.

TO THE MOST REVEREND CARDINAL LORENZO CAMPEGGI FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

My most reverend Lord, the report of your distinguished qualities and exceptional learning has fired me with a desire, now of long standing, to enjoy a closer acquaintance with your Eminence and pay my humble duty in person. Hitherto however I have been prevented, partly by my state of health, which, as a result of prolonged illness, is still too weak to be readily risked on an uncomfortable voyage; partly because some months ago I was summoned to France by a letter from his most Christian Majesty, to whom I could not excuse myself for very long. But I would not have my devotion to your Eminence pass in the mean time without some concrete evidence, and so I send you the New Testament newly revised with great labour by myself, which his holiness Pope Leo encouraged me to publish with a dedication to him, as his brief added at the beginning of the volume bears witness. This work met at the outset with some opposition, but only from people who did not read it or did not understand what they read. By now it has received a general welcome, except from a very few who are ashamed to change their minds. These men leave no stone unturned to suppress the humanities, which are coming into fresh bloom everywhere. This campaign they conceal behind splendid maxims – Down with Heresy, The Church is in danger – while I assure you there is quite other game afoot. As far as I am concerned, my sole object, forgetting all else, has been to put my modest gifts and such

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961

5 in person] In England

9 letter from his most Christian Majesty] Had Erasmus received such a letter, it would be most unlike him to leave it unanswered and unpublished. Nor is such a letter mentioned anywhere in his correspondence with Budé and others. Perhaps a word is missing in the printed text of this letter. Erasmus could originally have written: 'Christianissimi regis nomine literis evocatus sim' (by a letter (or letters) I was summoned to France in the name of his most Christian Majesty'), perhaps thinking of Epp 810:400–89, 926:30–42; cf Ep 896:92n.

14 brief] Ep 864

18 leave no stone unturned] Cf *Adagia* I iv 30.

small scholarship as I have at the service of Christ's glory and the good of the church. But I am a man; I may make mistakes. Yet, if my judgment has sometimes been at fault, my intentions at least have been anything but faulty. No one ever yet satisfied everybody; I am content that I give satisfaction to all critics of the highest standing.

But pray observe how perverse, I may say how ungrateful, some ill-natured persons are. Mistrusting the printed word and solid arguments, some of them attack me with malicious inventions. Any pamphlet that makes its appearance, and such things nowadays are given far too much licence, they ascribe to me. A book called *Nobody* appeared – that was its ridiculous title; they spread the tale that it was mine, and this calumny would have won the day, had not the indignant author laid claim to his bantling. Some absurd letters were published; people were found to say that I had a hand in the writing of them. Finally there appeared under somewhat dubious auspices a book by Martin Luther. I know as little of the author as I do of anyone; I have not yet read the book through, yet from the outset they were saying it was mine, though I did not write a line of it.

Since none of this makes any headway so far, their lies being refuted by the facts, they are trying to throw suspicion on me in connection with a certain dialogue. This, as the plot makes clear, was written to discredit the late Pope Julius at the time of the schism, but by whom is quite uncertain; some five years ago I dipped into it rather than read it. Afterwards I found copies of it in the hands of several people in Germany, but under various names. Some declared the author was a Spaniard but kept his name dark. Others gave it to Fausto the poet, others again to Girolamo Balbi. What to make of this I do not know. I followed the scent as far as I could, but have not yet arrived at any satisfactory conclusion. The man who wrote it was a fool; the man who published it deserves the heavier penalty. And I wonder

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32 *Nobody*] Hutten's *Nemo;* cf Ep 863:34n. Hutten's authorship cannot have been seriously in doubt. His name is given in the title of the earliest printed editions; those of 1518 have an anonymous title, but the poem is attributed to him on the verso of the title page; cf Hutten *Opera* I 9*–11*, 21*–24*.

35 letters] Probably the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum;* cf Epp 363 introduction, 622:5–11.

37 book] Froben's collection (cf Ep 904:20n). It was published under Luther's name, but Erasmus' close association with the Froben press could be held against him, especially by his current critics in Louvain; cf Ep 980, CWE 7 preface.

42 dialogue] Evidently the *Julius exclusus;* for the following cf Epp 636, 849:32n, 967:173–215.

47 Fausto ... Balbi] Balbi was a Venetian humanist who lived in Paris (cf Ep 23:49n) like Fausto Andrelini.

anyone could be ready to father it on me on grounds of style alone, since it is not my writing, unless I am quite ignorant of my own self; nor would it be surprising if there were people whose style smacked of Erasmus, since my things are in everyone's hands, and we commonly reproduce the tricks of an author whom we are constantly reading.

There are even people here who assert that your Eminence has almost come to suspect the same thing. Of this I certainly shall never be convinced, as long as I retain my conviction that what is commonly said by persons of the highest standing about your learning and your wisdom cannot be untrue. Nor have I the least doubt that, if some sort of suspicion has taken possession of your mind, I shall dissipate it without difficulty, given the opportunity of a conversation with you, which Christ in his goodness will one day permit. Until then I beg you of your kindness to believe that pieces of this kind written by others and ready for publication have actually been suppressed by me, so far am I from having published or being ever likely to publish anything of the sort myself. Nor is it surprising if in your part of the world there are people prepared to tell lies like this about me, seeing that here some men who are quite close to me are not ashamed to invent the most outrageous falsehoods. All the slanders spread by all these men it is impossible for me to answer, but what I can do, that I will. If my brains, my reading, and my industry have any value, it shall all be devoted to the purposes of Christ and his spouse. The truth of this will be clear to your Eminence if you will ever pay me the compliment of putting me to the test.

I send the book now in its native nakedness, for it has just come from the printer and there was no time to beautify it; but in a few days' time you shall have another suitably dressed. Your Eminence will be so kind as to remember me, his humble dependant, to the most reverend cardinal of York; to whom I intended to write, did I not think that for the moment you would share both this letter and the book with him. My respectful best wishes to your Eminence, to whom my services are entirely devoted.

Louvain, May day 1519

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65 suppressed by me] Cf Epp 636:29n, 904:20n.

74 nakedness] Probably unbound; from Campeggi's answer (Ep 995) it appears that this was one of the two parts of the New Testament, 1518–19, probably the text volume; cf Ep 864 introduction.

77 York] Wolsey

962 / To Richard Pace Louvain, [first half of] May [1519]

This letter was first published in the *Farrago* of October 1519, together with Ep 937, to which it is the answer. Thus the year given in the *Farrago* must be corrected. Also the day indicated, 'Ides of May' (15 May), is not beyond doubt, since Erasmus dated Epp 964, 966 on the same day from Antwerp. It seems clear, however, that this letter was sent either with Ep 961 or with Epp 964–7. When he wrote it Erasmus was evidently not expecting to meet Pace as soon as he actually did; cf Ep 968 introduction.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE HONOURABLE RICHARD PACE, FIRST SECRETARY OF HIS MOST SERENE MAJESTY THE KING OF ENGLAND, GREETING

If what you say about the paraphrase is true, I am glad, to be sure, that my labours are not wholly unsuccessful. Is it not pure bliss to win great gratitude for small pains? If I chose to compare one piece of work with another, writing the paraphrases is child's play compared with the efforts which the New Testament costs me. I only wish that everyone might experience the same result which you describe; for that they should find Paul at every opportunity more attractive will be quite sufficient return for all my labours. I should be sorry, however, if my paraphrase carried so much weight that anyone in reliance on them should neglect the explanations of the commentators, and especially the older ones; on the contrary, I hope that my work will rouse people to read them with more care. There will, I dare say, be some inquisitive people who will wish to test where I agree or disagree with the commentators, and perhaps there will be some who find fault. Paul takes it in good part, in whatever spirit the Gospel is preached, provided Christ is made known; nor does it make much difference to me in what spirit my paraphrase is read, provided that by this opportunity everyone is encouraged to study Paul. For the style, I have followed Seneca's advice, not aiming at elaborate language but using whatever came to hand unsought. The people who pride themselves on the precise fact that they are portentously barbarous and uncouth, ought not, I think, to be given so much importance that to please them we should aim at a hideous style, especially if it would

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962

7 child's play] Cf Ep 710 introduction.

16 Paul] Cf Phil 1:15–18.

20 Seneca's advice] For Erasmus' view of Seneca's style cf Ep 325:89–114, Allen Ep 2091:275–97.

cost us as much effort to write in their fashion as it costs them if they ever try to write well.

When you urge me to go on and finish what I have begun, you spur the willing jade. I have never seen anything more determined than this conspiracy against humane studies. Food and drink, sleep, music and dancing – of all such pleasures one can have enough, as Homer says; but the love of mischief-making in these men is never satisfied. And the lessons taught by the leaders are practised with such energy by the younger men that never was that saying (it is Euripides', if I mistake not) more in place: 'Many the pupils who outstrip their teachers.'

On the question of my crossing over, I will follow your advice: I will be guided by my state of health. That the king's feelings towards me should be unchanged gives me joy not only for my own sake but for the common cause of learning; for his good will to me has no other cause except his belief that Erasmus is something of a scholar. I have a poor appetite for praise; but, to confess the truth openly, in praise from such a prince there is neither discomfort nor disgrace. Farewell, my dear Pace, most scholarly of my friends and my best friend among scholars.

Louvain, 15[?] May 151[8]

963 / From Frederick of Saxony Grimma, 14 May 1519

This letter was composed in Frederick's name by his chancellor, Georgius Spalatinus, and published in 1545 together with Ep 939, the letter that it answered. Both evidently came from the same source, although no draft or final copy of Ep 963 remains in Weimar; cf Höss *Spalatin* 162.

FREDERICK BY THE GRACE OF GOD DUKE OF SAXONY, MARSHAL,
PRINCE ELECTOR, AND VICAR OF THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE,
LANDGRAVE OF THURINGIA AND MARKGRAVE OF MEISSEN
SENDETH GREETING

Although we have no doubt, most learned Erasmus, that you will fully

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28 jade] Homer *Iliad* 8.293–4; cf *Adagia* I ii 46.

30 Homer] *Iliad* 13.636, 637

32 younger men] Cf Ep 930:12n; Lee, Latomus, and the licentiate of Ep 946 were all younger friends of Briart.

33 Euripides] A Greek line of unknown authorship, quoted by Cicero in *Epistulae ad familiares* 9.7; cf *Adagia* III v 23. It is no 651 in the *Sententiae* ascribed to Menander, and adesp. 107 in Nauck's collection of the fragments of Greek tragedy.

understand from the letter we gave to Jodocus Jonas when he was lately setting out to visit you how much we appreciate your exceptional good will towards us, which so clearly appears more than anywhere else in the dedication of Suetonius and the other historians, yet we thought we ought to reply to the letter you wrote us from Antwerp on 14 April, for many other reasons but in particular because it was at once so learned and so eloquent and showed even more clearly your zealous feelings and religious affection (of which we have long been well aware) towards us and towards sincere and true Christian learning and the truth of the Gospel.

There is, as you say, an extraordinary conspiracy of those who hate more liberal studies, which can have no result except to do harm to good, pious, and educated men. That the Lutheran cause should not be condemned by the learned and that Dr Martin's works should be eagerly read by all men of good will in your part of the world is a joy to us; all the more because most men of good will and learning in our countries and principalities, to say nothing of foreign parts, write in praise of his life and character no less than of his scholarship. For his living hitherto among our people in Saxony has been a tribute not so much to the man as to his cause, for the last thing we would wish to achieve is to lay penalties upon those who deserve rewards. Nor, with the help of Almighty God, shall we ever so act that through our fault any innocent man is handed over to the impious keeping of those who seek only their own advantage.

Besides which, if God so please, we intend to show favour in future no less than in the past to the humanities and liberal studies and to those who teach and strive to learn them; and of this, in view of our special feeling for

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963

6 letter] It was delivered by Jonas (cf Ep 876) and answered by Ep 979 but is now lost, perhaps as a result of the circumstances mentioned in Epp 978, 1001. For a hint of its contents cf Allen Ep 1030:49–53. Following the example of Eobanus' pilgrimage (cf Epp 870 introduction, 982) two young teachers in the University of Erfurt, Justus Jonas and Kaspar Schalbe, set out at the end of term to visit Erasmus in Louvain. But they actually found him 'in Antwerp, on the sea shore' (*Jonas Briefwechsel* Ep 25) between c 20 and 26 May (cf Ep 964 introduction). Eobanus sent with them a copy of his *Hodoeporicon* (cf Ep 870 introduction), which was dedicated to Jonas. On 28 May the two travellers were in Brussels (cf Ep 977), and two days later they may have called on Erasmus at Louvain, eliciting from him Epp 981–3 to take home with them. Erasmus likewise entrusted them with Epp 950, 978–80. See Krause *Eobanus* I 300–2; cf also Ep 1157.

9 Suetonius] Ep 586; cf Ep 939:7–18

15 as you say] Ep 939:33–45

26 handed over] Cf Ep 939:48n.

you, we do not wish you to be unaware at this time. Farewell, most learned Erasmus.

From our castle of Grimma, 14 May 1519

964 / To Henry VIII

Antwerp, 15 May 1519

Erasmus dated Epp 964–9 from Antwerp between 15 and 20 May, Ep 970 from Brussels on 21 May, and Epp 973–4 again from Antwerp on 25 May. In all likelihood he briefly interrupted his visit to Antwerp to accompany Richard Pace to Brussels (cf Ep 968 introduction). There are indications though, that he went to Antwerp repeatedly during the spring of 1519. The purpose of his visits was partly recreational (cf Epp 934:10n, 952:12–13, 963:6n) and partly serious and unpleasant (cf Ep 991:21–2) because of his conflict with Edward Lee; cf Allen Ep 1061:584–600.

A common purpose of Erasmus' recent and current letters to England (Epp 961–2, 964–7), all published in the *Farrago*, was to elicit a clear assurance of adequate financial provision to allow him to settle there. He had planned to revisit England after his return from Basel in the autumn of 1518 (cf Epp 834, 886 introductions), and the troubles he had experienced in recent months (cf Ep 930:12n) must have reinforced his desire to carry out the plan and find a haven for his remaining years. With the second edition of the New Testament out of his way (cf Ep 864 introduction), he had turned to the paraphrases, a far less controversial undertaking than the critical edition. The work progressed smoothly (cf Epp 916, 956 introductions) and did not require the same exigencies of research and close collaboration with the publisher. Despite his repeated praise of Oxford Erasmus' hopes were pinned primarily on the king and Wolsey, who alone could offer a position of complete independence in the form of a rich benefice (cf Ep 970:20–1 and the absence of any reference to the projected journey in Epp 973, 990). Erasmus' present initiative, however, met with little response (cf Ep 1025), and he was never again to cross the English Channel.

TO HIS MOST SERENE MAJESTY HENRY VIII, KING OF ENGLAND, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

This lower world of ours, your Majesty, depends upon the heavenly bodies, upon those especially which hold first place among the stars; and in the same way the state of a commonwealth and people depends upon its princes, and specially upon supreme rulers of wide dominions, whose temperament and policy and character and feelings, and whose alliances and disagreements,

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33 Grimma] Town and residence, fifteen miles south-east of Leipzig

affect the multitude from time to time, just as the sea ebbs and flows as its changing tides follow the course of the moon or the earth obeys the movements of the sun, now all spring flowers, now parched with heat, now loaded with fruit, now hard with frost. And further, as the people's will and passions depend upon the king's lightest wish, even so (as the Hebrew sage's proverb puts it) 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord'; who, as often as he is angered by the crimes of mortal men, sometimes (in the words of Isaiah) gives them 'children to be their princes' and (in the words of Job, that holy man) 'alloweth the hypocrite to hold the reins of the kingdom,' where by the word 'hypocrite' he means one who is a king in name but in fact is a tyrant and a robber. Again, when he thinks fit to show the nations that his spirit is appeased and looks kindly upon them, then he gives princes a heart worthy of their kingly station.

Now here is an argument from which I think it possible to infer that at length, after so many tempests of misfortune, the eternal Godhead is reconciled to us once more – that he breathes such a spirit into the outstanding monarchs of our generation that they set the highest value of all on the things which belong to peace and piety and make for the well-being of the commonwealth. Though your Majesty, it is true, always showed this spirit; but the storms of fate have stood in the way hitherto. And now, now that the time is ripe and lends its aid, you do not so much plan what is best as carry out what was planned long ago by your mind, so worthy of a king.

To this glorious object many are the eminent princes who devote their efforts – Leo the Roman pontiff, Francis the king of France, his Catholic Majesty King Charles, the most serene king of Scots; yet in my view it is your Majesty who deserves the principal share of the credit, for this reason if no other, that it was your leadership, your encouragement, your wisdom that set this business on foot and controls it now. For when the Roman pontiff, who in other ways has shown his great desire for peace, was negotiating with a number of kings to secure peace at least for five years, it was your Highness who bound so many princes, the most powerful in the whole world, by the strictest undertakings to keep the peace, we hope, for ever. There was

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964

12 Hebrew ... proverb] Prov 21:1

15 Isaiah] Isa 3:4

15 Job] Job 34:30

32 Scots] The Latin text adds 'N': Erasmus could not recall the name of James V – an indication that since the death of Alexander Stewart (cf Ep 604:4n) he had lost touch with developments in Scotland.

39 for ever] After negotiations reaching back to July a treaty of perpetual peace was signed in London between French and English representatives on 2

a spirit truly royal, there was a lofty mind worthy above all of a Christian monarch! No king is better furnished with all the sinews of war; and yet you devote all your zeal and all your resources to the restoration of the peace of the world, wisely perceiving that nothing is more pernicious than the engagement of Christian peoples in mutual pillage and warfare, and that nothing renders Christ's people so formidable to the enemies of our religion as concord between princes and between their peoples.

That this same mind is certainly not adopted by you to suit the time but is deeply rooted in you by nature is clear enough from this if nothing else, that in the war with France, which you undertook against your will but yet at the bidding of Christian piety, you behaved with such humanity and moderation that it was clear enough how much peace was nearer to your heart, had you not been summoned, say rather compelled, to take up arms by the peril of the whole world and of the Christian church. Not content with this, when peace has been restored by your wisdom and your influence, you make it your object to adorn her with her proper arts, that she may not seem either barren and idle or the mistress of luxury and pernicious pleasures. The robberies, from which no part of England was safe hitherto, you put down with admirable severity, you break the spirit of evil-doers, you free your dominions from idle vagabonds, you give good laws their proper force again, abolish those that have lost their value, and add valuable new ones. You promote the pursuit of higher studies, you restore religion and discipline in all men and especially in the monks and clergy, knowing that it is from them above all that a high standard of morals, or else corruption,

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October 1518 (cf LB II 4351, 4469); among the latter were More, Tunstall, and Mountjoy. Public proclamation of the peace treaty, in the name of the Empire and Spain as well, took place at St Paul's Cathedral on 3 October, and later on many lesser powers acceded to the treaty. During the ceremony at St Paul's Wolsey celebrated high mass, and Pace made a speech. Another oration in praise of peace had been delivered by Etienne Poncher a few days earlier. Ostensibly concluded in compliance with the pope's appeal for a crusade (cf Ep 891:26n), the peace in fact brought little more than agreement on the final remaining differences between England and France (settled in subsidiary treaties signed on 4 October), but it was a triumph for Wolsey and a diplomatic defeat for Leo X and his legate, Campeggi, as Erasmus fully understood (cf Ep 967:21–4); see also Pastor VII 239–43; J.J. Scarisbrick *Henry VIII* (London 1968) 71–4.

49 war with France] Erasmus did not believe that Henry's wars against France in 1512–13 had been undertaken from pious motives, but at least his praise for the king's moderation was sincere. In Allen Ep 1211:576–616 he described candidly how with an expert display of pious concern Henry had managed to silence Colet's protests and perhaps his own conscience.

spreads through the common people. Clearly it is your policy in every way to do especial honour to men especially distinguished, either by high character or learning more than common or (what is both most admirable and most rare) by both. These are the ornaments which, as you believe, add to your realm far more lustre than any trophies or triumphal arches.

Nor are you only the cause and stimulus of these good things: you are their great example. Not content with precept, you are yourself the pattern; say rather, you do more yourself than you demand of others. It is a powerful and effective force, a king's authority when he issues orders; but it is wonderful to tell of, how much greater the effect when he displays obedience to his own orders and holds the standard of his own laws before his eyes all his life long. For you the laws hold no penalties, and yet what private person is more obedient to law than you? Who more incorruptible, who more strictly observant of his obligations, who more constant in friendship, who more devoted to what is right and just? What family of citizens offers so clear an example of strict and harmonious wedlock? Where could one find a wife more keen to equal her admirable spouse? What private home, what religious house indeed or university anywhere better supplied with men outstanding for their integrity of life and eminent learning than your court? The poets of Antiquity have handed down to us among their inventions something called a golden age. And yet, while your Majesty pursues these ideals, surely you are restoring to us an age truly of gold, if such a thing there ever was; and this difficult enterprise succeeds so well under your leadership that upon it beyond all doubt there rests the favour of heaven. What country is there in the world that does not rejoice with England, if she is your friend, or envy you if she does not wish you well? What kingdom in the whole world today more noble or illustrious?

Because, of course, it is the spirit of the king that makes kingdoms noble or obscure. Think of the books, the languages in which posterity one day will tell the story, how under her eighth Henry, a prince (as it might seem) sent forth by heaven for this express purpose, England blossomed with excellence of every kind until she seemed born anew! How he raised her standards of morality so high that even ancient Massilia might take her as a pattern of civic virtue; gave her so strong a sense of duty that she might offer Rome itself a lesson in devotion; filled her with learned men in every branch of knowledge until Italy might envy her, were not a common devotion to

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80 wife] Catherine of Aragon; cf Ep 855:34n.

85 truly of gold] Cf Epp 966:43, 967:19, 43; Bietenholz *History and Biography* 31–5.

96 Massilia] The city reputed for its high standard of public morals; cf *Adagia* II iii 98.

learning proof against envy; above all, how she enjoyed in him such a prince as might be the lodestar of the art of government for all future princes. As heaven is my witness, now at last we know what kingship means, what it is to be a king, to have a court worthy of a prince. Time was when from a sort of passion for literature and the delights of learned ease I felt some repugnance to the courts of kings. But now, when I contemplate what a prince and governor rules the English court, its queen, its nobles, counsellors, officials, I am eager in spirit to betake myself to a court like that. Nor should I be ashamed of such an ambition, did not the ill health, which grows upon me even out of proportion to my years, discourage it; not that I need fear in this the ugly reputation of an amibitious man; for I am encouraged to such thoughts even today by offers that do not deserve to be rejected, and from monarchs more than one. I am not, I confess, a native Englishman, only a grafted shoot; and yet when I turn over in my mind the years I have spent there, the benefactors that I owe to England, the eminent and trusty friends, the part of my resources (such as they are), I rejoice at the thought of her felicity no less than I should were she my mother-country.

All this time I have said nothing of your excellent gifts of body and mind, the things we owe to God and nature rather than to our own industry; yet these blessings tend no less to the felicity of a commonwealth if they fall to the lot of an upright prince. What is more, although for some centuries now a good education has not brought kings much praise, yet it will be your Majesty's doing when in time to come, just as in old days it was the special glory of kings to excel in knowledge, so it will be again a most excellent thing for a prince to be well read. Your excellence will refute the old complaint of some people, who maintain that an interest in learning saps the vigorous spirit of a king. Among princes with no learning was there ever one more skilled than you in every office of kingship? More zealous in the repression of crime, more skilled in counsel, of keener foresight, more effective in action? And yet in the subjects which your Majesty once took up with such happy results you have now made such progress, perhaps without much study but with unheard-of natural gifts, that even the most learned theologians are astonished at your sane and piercing judgment. Why, in the disputation

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112 monarchs more than one] Cf Ep 809:146–53.

132 disputation] A theological essay by the king on this topic is also mentioned in Allen Ep 1313:72–4, and perhaps in Ep 937:3–4 (cf also Ep 917:16), but is otherwise unknown. The question was much debated by the scholastics. Erasmus himself favoured private and personal prayer as an expression of heartfelt conviction rather than the mechanical repetition of traditional formulae. He was taken to task for his stand by the Sorbonne theologians; cf LB V 1128A–C, IX 895–7.

which your Majesty lately conducted for your own pleasure with a very acute and learned divine, supporting the view that no prayers should be expected from the laity except such as are addressed to God in the thoughts of the heart, what an expert, in heaven's name, you showed yourself! Whose invention could have been more piercing, whose inferences more vigorous, whose exposition more elegant? And to crown all your gifts and accomplishments, no one was more courteous in conflict than yourself, no one showed less pride or superiority; and yet all the time with no abatement of your royal dignity when it was called for.

In days of old, Horace wrote that Olympic victories raised the lords of the earth to join the gods; of old, the glorious rulers of an empire were formally added to the roll of deities. These are the achievements which earn true immortality; thus men rise to the stars. The genius of the men of letters whom you support and cherish in so many ways will not allow the memory of your virtues to fade as time grows old. In gratitude for what you have done, equally Greek and Latin scholarship will never tire of telling how the English once had an eighth Henry who in his sole person made the gifts and glories of so many heroes live again for their benefit: a Ptolemy Philadelphus for zealous support of good literature, an Alexander the Great for success, a Philip for courtesy, a Caesar for invincible energy of spirit – wise as Augustus, mild as Trajan, upright as Alexander Severus, learned as Antoninus Pius, religious as Theodosius, an embodiment of all that is great in the individual princes of Antiquity. We pray that God, the giver of all these gifts, may will that they bring prosperity and happiness to you and yours, and that he who set these impulses in you may advance them with his favour and bring the same to good effect.

I knew that it might be tedious for me to interrupt your Majesty, so busy as you already are, with such vain words as these. But the strong desire to utter my felicitations was too much for me, for I had learnt from many sources of the greatest worth what an age thanks to your virtue was to dawn upon us all; and at the same time it seemed right to go on record that I have not forgotten your favour towards me, which you have already shown in deeds and not in words alone. Many are the distinguished men whose gifts are illuminated and fostered by your noble self, and whose writings in return shed lustre on their service with you. Suffer your Majesty's humble servant

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142 Horace] *Odes* 1.1.3–6
145 rise to the stars] Virgil *Aeneid* 9.641
150 Ptolemy] Cf Ep 919:6n.
153 Trajan ... Theodosius] Roman emperors of the first to fourth centuries

Erasmus, for what he is worth, to be enrolled among their number. And may Christ the Almighty ever preserve you in health and prosperity.

Antwerp, 15 May 1519

965 / To William Blount, Lord Mountjoy Antwerp, [15?] May 1519

Cf Ep 964 introduction. The date of this letter given in the *Farrago*, 'Calends of May,' was perhaps already questioned by the editors of the *Opus epistolarum* of 1529, who simply dropped it. It seems to conflict with that of Ep 961. One solution is to substitute 'Ides' for 'Calends,' since the letter could very well have been dated the same day as Epp 964, 966, although the more optimistic mood of Epp 967:59–61, 968:20–3 still appears to be absent from lines 30–3; cf Ep 930:12n.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM, BARON MOUNTJOY FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Best of patrons, up to now I have rejoiced in the good fortune of your native England, as the home of so many men of outstanding character and accomplishments to match; but now I am in a fair way to be jealous, when I see her blossoming in liberal studies of every kind until she takes the lead over all other countries and puts them almost in the shade. Not but what this is no new feather in your island's cap, for it is well known you had great men in times past. Your universities, for instance, are a proof of this, rivals as they are in antiquity and distinction of the oldest and most famous that exist. I have a great devotion to my lord the bishop of Winchester, who has founded a magnificent college at his own expense expressly for the humanities. Even more do I love the noble and heroic spirit of the most reverend the cardinal of York, whose wise provision will win fame for the schools of Oxford in the learned tongues and every other field of knowledge, and also for those gifts of character which belong with liberal studies. As for Cambridge University, it has for some time now been adorned with every excellence under the rule

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965

12 college] Corpus Christi College was founded by Richard Foxe, bishop of Winchester, at the time of his retirement from politics, 1516–17. It was the first in Oxford devoted to the new learning, and its foundation parallels that of Busleyden's Collegium Trilingue in Louvain; cf Epp 691 introduction, 990:7n, and T. Fowler *The History of Corpus Christi College* (Oxford 1893).

14 provision] Of public readerships; cf Ep 967:40n.

of the bishop of Rochester, a man fit from every point of view to play the part of a distinguished prelate.

Even so, a large part of the credit for this belongs to your highly intelligent king, who is the source of all these plans. You enjoy unbroken and, we may reasonably hope, unending peace with all those monarchies and princes; offenders are banished, wise laws enjoy full force, sound learning is encouraged. Of all this the king himself is not only the originator and promoter but the great example, being the first to practise what he has ordained. There is no man living whose prosperity I desire more than yours; and yet I am almost jealous of your Lordship when I see you enjoy such blessings without me, your former partner in both weal and woe. And what makes it worse is that, during this time that you are blessed on so many counts, I have to do battle with certain frightful monsters rather than men, against whom I assure you I would gladly try what eloquence could effect, were I not restrained by Christian misgivings, or shall we say by some Pallas out of Homer, who plucks me by the hair as I lay my hand on my sword-hilt. Farewell.

Antwerp, [1] May 1519

966 / To Henry Guildford Antwerp, 15 May 1519

Cf Ep 964 introduction. The beginning of this letter suggests that Erasmus did not know the addressee personally, but he evidently knew that Sir Henry Guildford (1489–1532) had the king's ear. A congenial companion in sport and pastime, he was Henry's standard-bearer in the campaign of 1513 and continued to be a trusted and well-rewarded member of the royal household. When this letter was first published in the *Farrago* his name was given as Richard in the salutation and in line 48, but the slip was corrected in subsequent editions. Richard (d 1506) was Henry's father; see *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford and London 1885–).

TO SIR HENRY GUILDFORD, KNIGHT, MASTER OF THE HORSE TO THE KING OF ENGLAND, FROM ERASMUS, GREETING

I know from talking with many people of your Excellency's kindly feelings towards me, whether the first spark of this good will was kindled in you by

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18 Rochester] John Fisher had become chancellor of Cambridge University in 1504, the year of his appointment to the see of Rochester. For the beginnings of humanism in Cambridge cf McConica 78–80.

22 unending peace] Cf Ep 964:39n.

33 Homer] *Iliad* 1.194–7

something I had written or whether you derived it from conversation with Dr John Colet and my other friends. You think well of me because you suppose that I really am such a man as they have made me out to be. I in return am devoted to you, because with your whole heart you esteem excellence – yes, and humane studies, inasmuch as for their sake you esteem me too; not that I possess any gifts of the kind, but because you believe that I am thus gifted. At least I have always tried to promote sound learning, especially of the sort that makes for true religion. Would that the effort had been matched by the success! The world regains its senses, as a man wakes from the depths of sleep; and even so some people obstinately still resist, defending their ancient ignorance hand and foot, tooth and nail, they will be ashamed of their folly when they see great kings and their officers of state offering welcome and support and protection to studies of a better sort.

How astonishing are the revolutions in human affairs! In the old days, zeal for literature was to be found among the religious orders; and now they are devoted for the most part to good living and luxury and lucre, and the love of learning is moving over to live with the princes of this world and the great men of their courts. What university or monastery anywhere contains so many men of outstanding integrity and learning as your court can show? We should indeed be quite right to be ashamed of ourselves. The dinner-tables of clergymen and divines are sodden with drink, they are infected with scurrilous jests and loud with intemperate uproar or full of poisonous backbiting; and it is at the tables of princes that one finds moderate discussion of things that contribute to learning and piety. Everyone, of course, is quick to follow the example of your admirable king. To say nothing of his other gifts (which he shares with other monarchs, but in such a way that he excels in most of them, and is not outdone in any), where could one find greater keenness in argument, originality of thought, sanity of judgment, elegance of expression?

Time was when I was captivated by the charms of leisure and good letters and shunned the courts of kings; but to a court like yours I would gladly transfer myself with all my belongings (which are nearly all papers), if weak health and years which begin to tell on me did not dissuade me. What has become of the people who are always telling us that if a prince has any education, his energy must suffer? Look at Henry the Eighth. Who more skilful in war, more intelligent in legislation, more far-seeing in counsel, in the repression of crime more active, in the choice of magistrates and officers

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966

15 hand and foot] Cf *Adagia* I IV 15 and 22.

28 discussion] Cf Epp 917:14–18, 964:132n.

more painstaking, more successful in concluding alliances with other kings? For my part, I perceive the dawn of a new golden age, which maybe I shall not live to enjoy, for the part I play on the world's stage has reached its climax; but I count the world fortunate, and fortunate the younger generation, in whose memories the name of Erasmus will somehow live, in return for what he has done for them.

But to conclude, my dear Sir Henry, I return your cordial feelings, and for your more than common kindness to me I am all the more grateful, because you showed it without waiting to be solicited by some service on my own part. My warmest good wishes to the noble lady, your mother, whose acquaintance I owe to several conversations. May the Lord Jesus preserve this present mind in you, and preserve you for the common good. And I hope your Excellency will proceed to place the name of Erasmus on the list of your dependants, for you will certainly have none more zealous than myself.

Antwerp, 15 May 1519

Yours with all sincerity, Erasmus of Rotterdam

967 / To Thomas Wolsey — Antwerp, 18 May [1519]

Cf Ep 964 introduction. This letter shows many parallels with Ep 961, addressed to Campeggi, the other papal legate in England. Campeggi actually was a Legatus missus, or special envoy, whereas Wolsey was the Legatus natus, or perpetual legate (cf the salutation). This letter was published in the *Farrago*.

TO THE MOST REVEREND THOMAS ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, CARDINAL PRIEST OF ST CECILIA, PRIMATE OF ENGLAND, LEGATUS NATUS, AND THE MOST WORTHY CHANCELLOR OF THE WHOLE REALM, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

Respectful greetings, my most reverend Lord, who are not least among the glories of the most eminent college of cardinals. If I have hitherto not paid a further visit to the distinguished benefactors whom England holds for me in such plenty, part of the reason is the burden of my labours, which almost overwhelm me when one task is piled on another, 'as wave succeeds to

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42 alliances] Cf Ep 964:39n, and lines 83–5 for the 'golden age.'

47 what he has done] For Erasmus' school-books cf Ep 932:24n; for their popularity cf F. Vander Haeghen ed *Bibliotheca Erasmiana: Répertoire des œuvres d'Erasme* I: *Liste sommaire* (Ghent 1893, reprint 1961) and McConica 31–2 and passim.

51 mother] Joan (d 1538), sister of Sir Nicholas Vaux. After the death of her first husband, Sir Richard Guildford, she continued to attend the court.

wave,' if I may borrow Ovid's words; but principally it is the state of my health, which from much serious and prolonged illness is still so feeble that I dare not entrust myself to a trying sea-voyage. If furthermore I have not paid my respects in a letter to your Eminence, this is partly because I was ashamed that my worthless remarks should interrupt one so fully occupied with important business of both realm and church, and partly that I was deterred by your exalted station, whom the greatest in the land do not address without misgiving. Since, however, those who visit us from your country report with one accord how energetic and how successful your wisdom and your piety have been in turning the bronze age of England into gold, I could not refrain from sending my felicitations to you on your policy, and to my beloved England on possessing you. For, as all the world avers, it is you who have cemented with such close-knit treaties that peace which all the greatest monarchs had long desired, while Pope Leo, who is in any case such a lover of peace, was thinking only of a five-year truce.

The whole of England is purged, thanks to you, of robbers, brigands, and idle vagabonds, so that there is no more danger from ruffians than from poison or dangerous wild beasts. The tangles of the law you cut asunder as successfully as ever great Alexander did the Gordian knot. Disputes among the nobility are settled, monasteries everywhere restored to their old religious discipline, the whole clergy recalled to a more praiseworthy form of life – and all by you. The study of the humanities, hitherto somewhat fallen, is rebuilt; the liberal arts, still struggling with the champions of ancient ignorance, are supported by your encouragement, protected by your power, gilded in your reflected glory, and nourished by your munificence, as you offer princely salaries to attract outstanding scholars to come and teach. In the getting-together of libraries richly furnished with good authors

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10 Ovid's words] Horace *Epistles* 2.2.176, not Ovid; but Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15.181 is close to it.

22 peace] Cf Ep 964:39n, and lines 83–5 for the 'golden age.'

25 purged] For Wolsey's vigorous administration of justice see J.D. Mackie *The Early Tudors* (Oxford 1952) 295–7; G.R. Elton *England under the Tudors* (London 1962) 81–2.

28 Gordian knot] Cf *Adagia* I IX 48.

29 monasteries] In August 1518 Wolsey received papal authority to hold visitations of exempt monasteries (cf LP II 780, 968, 4399, III 693). In March 1519 he issued a set of reformatory constitutions for the non-exempt Austin friars. Up to 1529 he used his various powers to suppress some twenty-nine houses and attempted to improve others, perhaps combining personal gain with genuine reform and the promotion of scholarship; cf D. Knowles *The Religious Orders in England* (Cambridge 1948–59) III 157–64.

of every kind, you rival Ptolemy Philadelphus himself, who owes his fame to this even more than to his crown. The three ancient tongues, without which all learning is handicapped, are revived among us by you; for I regard the generous benefaction now offered to the famous university of Oxford as a blessing to the whole of Britain. Indeed I am confident of this also, that the splendid example you have set will one day rouse the ambition of our princes likewise. I see, I see a kind of golden age arising, if once that spirit of yours enters a certain number of princes. The due reward for these your pious undertakings will be laid up for you by him under whose blessing we see them go forward, but posterity will not be ungrateful: the new and blessed state of things which you inaugurate for the world will be the theme of gifted writers in the future. Your mind, designed by Nature to be a blessing to our mortal state, will be recorded in everlasting works by the most gifted pens in both Latin and Greek. Such are the columns and the pyramids which build up and enshrine the undying memory of a noble name.

For myself meanwhile, rejoicing as I do in this general felicity, I am delighted to find my own name eclipsed by the brilliance of younger men, while talents now come into flower compared with which I am ignorant and tongue-tied. Enough for me is the credit, if I may be thought to deserve it, of being rated one of those who attempted to drive far from this quarter of the world the inspissated barbarism and shameful lack of style for which we used hitherto to be criticized by Italy. What success has been mine, I do not know; I know the attempt has not been wholly popular, for unpopularity must accompany great enterprises, as shadows keep company with light – though the majority grow more well disposed. A few rebellious spirits still resist, too grand to expect, too stupid to encompass, too arrogant to desire the knowledge of better things. Such men cannot be induced to believe that their authority need not utterly collapse if we read the Scriptures in a corrected text and seek our understanding of them from the fountain-head. Such is the value they set on their own high position that they would rather see widespread ignorance, widespread error in the reading and citation of

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37 Ptolemy] Cf Epp 919:6n, 964:150.

40 benefaction] In the spring of 1518 Wolsey had announced his intention to found several public readerships at Oxford. Among the early appointees were Erasmus' humanist friends Clement, Lupset, (cf Ep 270:69n), and Vives. The first readers were lodged at the new Corpus Christi College (cf Ep 965:12n); hence Erasmus on a later occasion mistakenly referred to Wolsey as the founder of Corpus Christi (cf LB IX 781F). Actually in 1524–5 Wolsey created Cardinal College to house his foundation; cf C.E. Mallett *History of the University of Oxford* (London 1924–7) II 20–6.

61 more well disposed] Cf Ep 968:21n.

Holy Writ than have it thought that there is anything they did not know. So feeling themselves to have the worst of the argument and, if they compete in print, to achieve nothing except to advertise their own mixture of ignorance and folly and make themselves a laughing-stock to the learned, they lose confidence in open fight and take refuge in trickery, loading with slanders the humanities and their champions, above all myself, whom they suppose to have made a not wholly valueless contribution to the revival of these studies.

Any publication that is likely to cause trouble is laid at my door. You could fairly say that here even calumny has its ingenious side. They confound the cause of the humanities with the business of Reuchlin and Luther, though there is no connection between them. Personally I have never felt the attraction of Cabbala or Talmud. I have met Reuchlin once only, in Frankfurt, and there is nothing between us except friendship and courtesy such as exists between almost all scholars; nor for that matter would it embarrass me to be linked with him in some relationship. He has a letter from me, in which before we had ever met I told him to refrain from the open abuse with which in his *Defence* he lets fly at his opponents as Germans often do; so far am I from having ever approved of defamatory publications. I know as little of Luther as I do of anyone, nor have I yet found the time to leaf through his books except for a page here and there; not that I despise him, but the pressure of my own work has not yet allowed me the leisure. And yet some people, they tell me, have a trumped-up story that he has had help from me. If what he has written is right, none of the credit is mine; if not, I deserve no blame, for in all his work not a jot anywhere belongs to me. That this is perfectly true will be clear to anyone who is willing to look into it. The man's way of life is universally well spoken of; and this is already no small argument in his favour, if his character is so upright that even his enemies cannot invent a scandal to his discredit.

But even had I all the time in the world to read him, I do not rate myself so highly as to be willing to pronounce on the writings of a man of his stature, although mere boys nowadays often pronounce in the most irresponsible manner that one statement is erroneous and another heretical. In fact, I was at one time somewhat unfair to Luther, for fear that some of his

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78 Reuchlin] Cf Epp 622, 694 introductions, 821:19n.
79 Luther] Cf Epp 933, 938:5n, 939 introduction.
80 Cabbala or Talmud] Cf Ep 798:21–3.
81 Frankfurt] In March or April 1515; cf Ep 332 introduction; Hutten *Opera* I Ep 26.
83 letter] Cf Ep 300:20–7.
90 help from me] Cf Ep 761:37n.
101 somewhat unfair] Cf Ep 904:20n.

unpopularity might rub off on the humanities, which already had, I thought, enough to carry; for I had not failed to notice what an unpopular thing it is to undermine whatever provides priests or monks with a rich harvest. There had appeared, to begin with, a number of propositions on the papal remission of sins; then came two or three pamphlets on confession and on penance. When I sensed that some men I could name were anxious to publish these, I seriously dissuaded them from imposing this burden of unpopularity on the humanities. Luther's own supporters will bear witness to the truth of this. At length there appeared a swarm of pamphlets. No one saw me reading them, no one heard me express approval or disapproval. I am not rash enough to approve what I have not read, nor malicious enough to condemn what I do not know; though nowadays this is a habit even in those to whom it is least becoming.

Germany possesses several young men who hold out great promise in the way of both scholarship and style, and with their help I foresee that Germany can some day be as proud as England rightly is proud now. None of them are personally known to me except Eobanus, Hutten, and Beatus. These men employ every species of artillery in their battle with the enemies of the ancient languages and of those liberal studies which every man of liberal outlook supports. The liberty they allow themselves I would myself agree to be insupportable, did I not know the outrageous provocation they have suffered in public and private alike. Their opponents seize the opportunity of sermons, lectures, and conversation at the dinner-table for ranting away to their hearts' content, no matter how full it all is of prejudice and even of sedition, before the ignorant public; and then they call it an

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105 propositions] The Ninety-five Theses; cf Ep 785:39n.

106 on confession] *Ein Sermon von Ablass und Gnade,* frequently published between 1518 and 1520 (cf Benzing *Lutherbibliographie* nos 90–114). A Latin translation was printed in Froben's collection; cf Ep 904:20n.

106 on penance] *Sermo de poenitentia;* for editions 1518–19 cf Benzing *Lutherbibliographie* nos 127–34.

107 some men I could name] Perhaps in Basel, where several books by Luther were published in 1518 and where Capito, together with Oecolampadius, Beatus Rhenanus, and Conradus Pellicanus (cf Allen Ep 1637 introduction), had encouraged Froben to launch his collection (cf Allen Ep 1526:34–7; Volz *Die ersten Sammelausgaben* 186, 192; but cf Ep 904:20n). The vagueness of the statement here may be deliberate. Martens in Louvain too, who had recently printed the *Julius exclusus,* never participated in the lucrative boom of Luther publications.

118 Beatus] Beatus Rhenanus. The following statements seem to refer to the younger German humanists in general, since Beatus Rhenanus could hardly be considered a typical example of unbridled language; but cf BRE Epp 75, 81.

outrage if one of these young men dares open his mouth, though even the poor bee has a sting to strike back with when she is attacked and mice have their tiny teeth for defence against assault. Whence comes this new race of divine beings? They make heretics of anyone they please and then confound heaven and earth if someone calls them mischief-makers; they are not afraid to form crazy ideas which would be too much for Orestes himself; and yet they demand that we should never utter their names without some honorific prefix – so complete is their reliance on the folly of the multitude, not to say, of princes.

For myself, though scholarship has never been within my grasp, it has always been my first love. Its defenders have my support, and they are supported by men in high place everywhere, except a few ass-eared Midases whom someone some day will put in the pillory. And yet my support has this limitation: it is their good qualities I love and not any faults that may be there as well. If anyone considers the faults in which those men were steeped who long ago in Italy and France brought aid and comfort to the rebirth of ancient studies, he cannot fail to support these men of ours, whose characters are such as to deserve imitation rather than rebuke from the theologians who criticize them. Whatever is put out by these men is suspected of being mine; and the same in your country too, if the merchants who visit us from your parts speak the truth. I will make a candid confession: a gifted nature I cannot help but love, an unbridled pen no matter whose I cannot approve of.

Long ago Hutten wrote a trifling thing which he called *Nobody*. Nobody can fail to see that the subject is humorous; it was said to be mine by the theologians of Louvain, who think they have sharper eyes than any Lynceus. Next came his *Febris*; this too was mine, though the whole spirit and the whole style are unlike mine. A speech appeared by Petrus Mosellanus in support of the three tongues against our anti-linguists. They thought this a stick to beat me with, though I was still unaware the thing existed; as though, let anyone take it into his head to write no matter what, I

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128 poor bee] Cf *Adagia* II v 31.
131 heaven and earth] Cf *Adagia* I iii 81.
132 Orestes] Struck with madness after killing his mother, Clytaemnestra, he presents the standard type of madness in the Greek tragic theatre.
138 Midases] Midas, king of Phrygia, was punished for his arrogance by being given the long ears of a donkey; cf *Adagia* I iii 67.
149 *Nobody*] Cf Ep 961:32n.
152 Lynceus] Cf *Adagia* II i 54.
152 *Febris*] Cf Ep 923:23n.
154 Mosellanus] Cf Ep 934 introduction.
155 a stick to beat] Literally 'these beans would be threshed'; *Adagia* I i 84.

must be ready with an answer on behalf of them all, or as though I had not enough to do to defend at my own risk what I write myself. They are Germans, they are young, they have pen in hand, they are not short of brains; nor is there any shortage of men to provoke them by their hostility and spur them on and brace them to the task. They have all had letters from me telling them to restrain their licence, or at least to keep off the highest figures in the church; not to arouse animosity against liberal studies in those whose support enables our studies to withstand their enemies and to lay this burden of unpopularity on the champions of the humanities. What am I to do? Warn them I can, compel them I cannot. My own pen I am in a position to control; to be responsible for what other people write is not my business. In fact – and this is the most foolish thing of all – the book lately written by the bishop of Rochester against Lefèvre was suspected of being mine, although the style is so entirely unlike mine and though I fall so far short of that gifted prelate as a scholar. There were even men ready to give me More's *Utopia,* so universal is the rule that any new publication, willy nilly, must be mine.

There appeared a few months ago – and ill-starred its appearance was – a humorous pamphlet, clearly written during the recent schism, as the subject proved, but who the author was is not clear, except that the text shows him to have been, whoever he was, on the French side. Suspicion knocks at many doors, especially in Germany, where the work circulates in manuscript under various titles. This I discovered several years ago was to be had here on the side, and I sampled the thing – for I ran through it rather than read it – and many people can bear witness to the abhorrence I expressed and the active steps I took to ensure that it should be buried in eternal obscurity. Many too will agree that I have done the same in respect of other pamphlets as well. There is more evidence of this in a letter of mine to Johannes Caesarius, which certain persons copied secretly and have published at Cologne. I hear too that there are some people in your part of the world who try to fasten on me the suspicion of having written this pamphlet also; so determined are they to try everything, those men who are sorry to see this revival in the ancient tongues and in liberal studies. In so doing they rely on no argument except the style; which however is not much like my style, unless I have very little idea of it. Not but what it would be no great surprise if in that piece or elsewhere there were some resemblance to

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168 book] Cf Ep 936:9n.

174 pamphlet] The *Julius exclusus* (cf Ep 961:40–55). Among the most recent editions was that of Martens (Louvain September 1518; NK 3283–4); cf *Opuscula* 55–8.

183 other pamphlets as well] Cf Epp 636:29n, 904:20n.

183 letter] Ep 622

my way of writing, for hardly anyone writes nowadays without rousing some echoes of my style, simply because my books are in the hands of nearly everyone, so that even in the work of those who attack me in print I not seldom recognize my own phrases and feel I am transfixed with an arrow I myself have feathered.

I have never yet written any work, and never shall, to which I do not set my name. I indulged my humour some time ago in the *Moria*, but without drawing blood, though maybe I let myself go rather too freely. But one point I have always watched, that nothing should issue from me which could corrupt the young by impropriety or offend in any way against religion or provoke civil strife and faction or leave a black mark on any man's reputation. All my efforts hitherto have been devoted to the promotion of honourable studies and to the advancement of the Christian religion. All men everywhere express their gratitude to me, except for a handful of theologians and monks who have no wish to be better scholars or better men than they are now. May Christ's displeasure ever be my lot if I do not wish whatever I may possess of ability or literary skill to be entirely dedicated to Christ's glory, to the catholic church, and to sacred study. That this is true will be clear to anyone who is prepared to identify my purpose at first hand.

But enough of all this – more than enough. Yet I would not have written it at all had not a certain English merchant visiting us from your part of the world assured me with some emphasis that people exist who have tried to infect your Eminence with suspicion on this point, than which nothing could be more baseless. But your exceptional wisdom makes me quite confident that you will not lend your ears or your mind to such impudent inventions. In fact, if you will ever deign to test me at close quarters, you will find in your Erasmus a whole-hearted servant of the Roman See, and especially of our Holy Father Leo the Tenth (for of my debt to his generosity I am well aware), and whole-heartedly devoted to those outstanding men who promote the interests of the humanities and of the Christian religion among whom your Eminence holds first place. I send you the New Testament and shall consider it greatly honoured if you think it worthy of a place in your library. Respectful good wishes to your Eminence, to whom I profess myself entirely devoted.

Antwerp, 18 May [1518]

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196 feathered] The eagle in Aesop 4 was shot by an arrow fledged with eagle feathers.

198 I indulged] Cf Ep 622:23–4.

202 black mark] Cf Horace *Ars poetica* 446, 447.

223 New Testament] See Ep 864 introduction.

967A / To Justus Jonas Antwerp, [c 20–6 May?] 1519

This letter, which is Ep 985 in Allen, was published in the *Farrago* with the date of 1 June (Calends). This is questionable for several reasons. Erasmus' presence at Antwerp (cf Ep 964 introduction) does not seem to have extended beyond c 26 May, and in view of Epp 975, 984 it is unlikely that he would have returned there again on 1 June. We also have Jonas' own comments on the composition of this letter (*Jonas Briefwechsel* Ep 36). In March 1520 he recalled that Erasmus had written a short letter for him during his visit (cf Ep 963:6n). This text, Jonas stated, was amplified in the *Farrago* as a sign of friendly tribute and reached more than twice the length of the original letter. The assumption that this letter was originally composed when Jonas and Schalbe visited Erasmus in Antwerp would also explain the insistence of Schalbe in Ep 977 that he desired a letter no less ardently than Jonas (who actually got one; cf Ep 981:14–15). The date 'Calends of June' as in Epp 965, 975 may be an approximation only added at the time of printing, or the type-setter may have omitted a numeral before the abbreviated words 'Calends of June,' which would have moved the date back to the second half of May.

The main theme of this letter, preaching in accordance with the philosophy of Christ, is reminiscent of the request Erasmus received in Ep 932.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JODOCUS JONAS OF ERFURT, GREETING

A long and scholarly letter from such a learned and most open-hearted friend as you are, my dear Jonas, must not go unrequited: let me submit to your better judgment the following thoughts. Although Almighty God had it in his power to endow each individual man with every gift, yet to encourage concord between man and man, by which he set particular store, he thought it more appropriate to distribute his gifts, one to this man and another to that, in such a way that men were obliged to help one another; with the further intention that none should trust unduly in himself alone, knowing that whatever faculties he possessed came entirely from divine goodness, nor should one man despise another as he bore in mind that God had wished men to receive a large part of his bounty from the unselfish action of their fellows. In this way too no man would claim as his own doing a benefit that he had conferred upon another or expect the man he had helped to feel obligation, because he would know well that he was the servant and tool of

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967A

1 Erfurt] Jonas was not a native of Erfurt. In his Ep 36 (cf the introduction) he noted the slip and expected that it would be corrected in a second edition.

another's bounty and not the originator, while the man who was conscious of a benefit received would feel gratitude to his fellow-man but express his thanks to God as the author and source of all good things, not only for the receipt of the benefit from him through another man but directly for the benefit itself, because both the will and the power to do good to his neighbour had come to that man from the divine bounty.

It ought therefore to be the common purpose of us all to help one another in turn whenever we can, and not refuse help one from another when we are in need. Since however God's gifts are of many kinds and differently distributed as though to divers members of the same body, each man should devote himself especially to the place where he feels he can be of especial use. For it is not sufficient if as a member of the body you are not wholly idle; you must do what you can for the body where you can do it best, especially because such faculties as each man may possess were given him by God on purpose that he might contribute them to the common good. It is not enough to consider how many talents you have, you must consider the value and use of each talent separately. Thus it will come to pass that the lord who, rich as he is, is very eager for profits of this kind may rejoice to see his house grow more and more rich from the business activities of his faithful servants. On this point I find some people lacking in wisdom or good fortune, who before they are really acquainted with themselves plunge into some way of life in which they can be of no use either to themselves or to others.

This train of thought, dearest Jonas, immediately entered my head as I conjured up an image of your mind from what you write and the manner of man you are, and then from your expression and your person. Although I suppose you know something of yourself, yet I thought I should tell you this: God did not design you for the base activity of the law-courts, but he seems rather to have made you as a chosen instrument for the greater glory of Jesus his son and to kindle the souls of mortal men with zeal for him. You must therefore devote all your powers to this most life-giving activity, and that too in good time, while your frame can endure hard work and your mind retains its vigour. Your efforts will be brought to good effect, believe me, by him who equipped you with so many excellent gifts for this very purpose. He who gave you a heart fervent with the love of true religion and a practised tongue, to scatter, to root out, and to plant, will not fail you as you attempt

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35 faithful servants] Cf Matt 25:14–30, Luke 19:12–27.

43 base ... law-courts] A recent licentiate in law (August 1518), Jonas began to study theology after his current journey to the Netherlands. In 1520 he lectured on Corinthians.

51 to scatter ... plant] Jer 1:10

these tasks, especially if you keep no end in view except that Christ may gain. It may be splendid to move your hand in blessing over a multitude on its knees, it may be a great thing to administer the sacraments of the church; unquestionably the noblest office, the most truly worthy of apostle or of bishop, is to offer the doctrine of salvation to the people and make their thoughts and their life worthy of Christ.

Yet in that office, which is at once the fairest and the most difficult of all, who are the men whom we see active everywhere today? Most of them lack higher education, some of them have no heart, without which all Christian eloquence must be lifeless, many of them no gifts of nature – they have no tongue, the instrument of speech; their lungs and their physique in other ways cannot support such efforts. Never mind: we must follow Paul and make the best of what they are trying to do, provided Christ be proclaimed, if proclaimed he really is! A good many preach not Christ but man, themselves in fact. But to deplore this now is not my point. Some treat of Scotist subtleties before the ignorant multitude, choosing for the purpose the most complicated themes that they may be thought marvellous by their hearers, if they do not understand a word. What could be more tedious? Or (what matters more) more unfruitful? Other men bring nothing to their sermons but the dogmas of the schools, some of which are the kind of thing that it does not matter not to know and some, when treated outside the lecture-room, are merely tedious. There are even people who, in the attempt to satisfy their hearers' curiosity, collect from all sources (as though they were epic lays) a kind of patchwork of civil law, canon law, and doctors in variety, for fear there should seem to be any book they have not read. All human ambition must be laid aside by the man who aspires to instil true religion into the hearts of mortal men.

You are too sensible to need to be told by me that it does more to implant in men's minds the philosophy of Christ if one presents the admirable and lovely image of true religion in as lively colours as one can, rather than strain voice and lungs in a denunciation of the forms and kinds of vice. The face of virtue has a power of its own, and when she is displayed before uncorrupted eyes, they are rapt straightway with love of her. It is an endless task to run through all the ways in which men go astray from what is right. It is better to exhibit the pattern and let each man silently examine himself against that; except that there may be a fault of this special kind, that a man be deceived by the appearance of piety that is not really there. It will also be appropriate to

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62 instrument] Erasmus uses *plectrum*, with which the lyre was plucked; perhaps a reminiscence of Cicero *De natura deorum* 2.149.

63 Paul] Cf Phil 1:15–17.

mention faults by name in suitable contexts, so that no one may fall into error through ignorance. As things are now, you may see some preachers holding forth on the basis of men's secret confessions, describing monstrous vices in such detail as to teach how to commit them, and criticizing them in such a way that you would think they envied the sinner or enjoyed the sin. What does it profit, if a man catalogues all the ways in which one can sin from lust, or declaims that there are adulterers everywhere? It will prove more to the point to set before the mind's eye the honourable old ideal of purity, the mere sight of which made Augustine instantly reject with loathing all kinds of dishonourable lust. It is the same with the others: whoever has once conceived a passion for the lovely image of Christian piety begins at that moment to hate all that he sees to be incompatible with it.

Nor have I any use for those men who, in order to acquire a reputation for holiness among common people, rant like demagogues against the faults of bishops or princes; this kind of clamour only makes them still worse, while they are often put right by a rebuke tendered at the right moment and in tactful and courteous fashion. Religion has its right of free speech, but this should always be tempered with the honey of charity. So far as one can, one should go easily with those who exercise supreme authority in the state. If the facts call for severity, one should be severe not so much against the great ones themselves as against those who misuse the authority of pope, bishops, or princes to satisfy their own desires. Nor should one be severe at random against whole orders of men; it is better to protest against those who by their faults bring otherwise admirable orders into disrepute. It will be found more profitable to demonstrate how far from true religion are those who profess the rule of Benedict or Francis or Augustine and yet live for their bellies, for gluttony, lust, ambition, or avarice, than to attack the regular religious life itself. It would be more unprofitable to condemn the universities than to indicate what should properly be pruned away from them or might usefully be added. Human nature is like that – more easily drawn by courtesy than dragged by harsh treatment.

It will add not a little force to what you say if your teaching is drawn principally from Holy Writ, if your life answers to your teaching, if your work as a teacher is spoilt by no taint of ambition or desire for gain. Force and brilliance will be added if you are truly in love with what you teach, if you proceed to your pulpit not from profane conversation or the convivial glass but from concentrated prayer, that you may come forward to kindle the hearts of others with fire in your own heart.

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97 Augustine] Cf *Confessions* 8.11, 26–7.

But how long-winded I am become – and to you, from whom I ought rather to have been anxious to learn. Farewell, my dear Jonas.

Antwerp, [1 June] 1519

968 / To Albert of Brandenburg Antwerp, 20 May 1519

Published together in the *Farrago*, Epp 968–70 show many parallels. All three are letters of introduction for Richard Pace, who was on his way to Frankfurt, where the electors were assembling to choose the new emperor. Pace's mission was to promote the election of Henry VIII or at any rate to prevent that of Francis I. On 14 May he arrived in Calais and on 17 May he was in Bruges. It appears likely that he met Erasmus at Antwerp on 20 May (cf Epp 968–9) and they travelled together to Brussels (cf Epp 970–1), where Pace had an interview with Margaret of Austria on 21 May (cf Ep 976:40). Pace was still waiting for his credentials to follow from England, hence in part his desire to have Erasmus' introductions. While Erasmus returned to Antwerp, Pace continued his journey to Louvain, Cologne, and Frankfurt. As the day of the election approached foreign ambassadors were expected to leave Frankfurt. Pace left on 10 June for Mainz, where he remained until Charles was declared emperor on 28 June; see LP III 218–39 passim and J. Wegg *Richard Pace* (London 1932) 142–53.

Albert's answer to this letter is Ep 988.

TO THE MOST REVEREND ALBERT, CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF MAINZ, ETC, FROM ERASMUS, GREETING

Most reverend Prelate and most illustrious Prince, I have no doubt that the small book which I dedicated to your Eminence has reached you. Whether it gives you satisfaction I do not know; it gives none to me, but at that moment it was all I had ready. I shall look about for something else which may be more adequate both to your greatness and to my devotion to you.

Dr Richard Pace, who is on his way to you as the envoy of the king his master, has apart from countless other gifts a remarkable knowledge of both Greek and Latin; he stands very high with his majesty on many counts, has

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968

4 small book] The *Ratio verae theologiae* (cf Ep 745). From Albert's answer (Ep 988:29–32) it appears that in the letter to Hutten which accompanied the book for Albert (cf Epp 951:8–10, 986 introduction) Erasmus had expressed concern about the two different dedications (cf Ep 976:18n), which he may only just have become aware of; he decided at once to send Albert a copy of Martens' edition. The promise of more to come was fulfilled only by a new preface for another edition of the *Ratio*; see Ep 1365.

great strength of character and a spotless reputation, and is a man made expressly for friendship and popularity. If you give him the honour of your closer acquaintance, I know that you will be very glad to have received this hint from me. In England good literature is triumphant. The king himself, the queen, both cardinals, the bishops almost to a man are whole-hearted in their sympathy and good will and give the cause both resources and prestige. The quarrelsome critics have all been silenced by the king. I hope the same thing will happen in Germany, if your Eminence and others like you lend your favour and encouragement; and this I most earnestly beg you to do. There are some malicious individuals who stick at nothing, especially in this place, where Barbarism when she quitted the earth seems to have left 'her latest footprints.' Though even here such men are growing milder and begin to see what fools they are.

Hutten's gifts are daily more widely recognized, and by your generous kindness to him your Highness is winning much praise, and indeed gratitude, from the learned world. Long may Christ Jesus, who conquered death, preserve you in health and wealth.

Antwerp, 20 May 1519

969 / To Antoon, son of Jan van Bergen — Antwerp, 20 May 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago*; for the circumstances of its composition see Ep 968 introduction. Antoon was still studying in Louvain with Baerland (cf Ep 760) and may already have planned to go to England (cf Ep 1025 introduction); if so, Pace was likely to receive hospitality and additional recommendations; cf Ep 953:27n.

TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS YOUNG MAN ANTOON VAN BERGEN FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Hitherto, my distinguished young friend, I had at any rate one reason for admiring you, that you took delight in honourable studies and honourable conduct beyond the ordinary custom of the nobility. And now I have another, in that I have experienced great kindness from your father. All his

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15 both cardinals] Wolsey and Campeggi (cf Ep 961 introduction). For the cultured atmosphere of the English court cf Ep 855.

21 in this place] Louvain (cf Ep 930:12n). That the storms had abated by now is confirmed in Epp 967:61, 969–71, 980:35–7, 983:9–11.

22 'her latest footprints'] When Justice left this world for heaven at the end of the golden age, she lingered among the country folk. Erasmus borrows a phrase from Virgil *Georgics* 2.473, 474.

hopes are centred on your character; this I know clearly from his conversation, and I have no doubt that in every way you will answer your excellent father's expectations.

Good literature blossoms everywhere, and vainly do the supporters of traditional ignorance struggle against it. In England humane studies are triumphant, with the support of the king, the cardinals, and the bishops. The quarrelsome critics who use their voices for evil-speaking only have been silenced. Here, since we have no such patrons, they are still in full cry and are even advancing to the attack in printed books; but they are such books as can only betray their own silliness and dullness of mind. Yet even they grow gradually milder, like men recovering from a severe fever; and they will be silent once the goodwill of princes has come to our aid. Of Ferdinand I have great hopes, and I have no mean hopes of you too. Charles is too far away. As for the lord of Chièvres, small wonder if he has no time for literature, though he is not actively against it. Cardinal Adrian has never shown much good will towards humane studies, while not their sworn foe like some men, who think they cannot be left in peace themselves unless humane studies are suppressed.

The bearer of this, Richard Pace, who is the envoy of the English king and stands high in his favour, is a man whose acquaintance will bring you great joy if you get to know him well; apart from his open-hearted nature, he is very good at both Greek and Latin. Best wishes. Give my cordial greetings to Adriaan van Baerland.

Antwerp, 20 May 1519

970 / To Jacopo Bannisio — Brussels, 21 May 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago;* for its composition and contents see Ep 968 introduction. Bannisio (cf Ep 700) was a Hapsburg diplomat. His life is not well known, and it is not clear on what new appointment Erasmus wished to congratulate him. The greetings to Frederick of Saxony (lines 35–6) suggest that Erasmus expected him to be at Frankfurt in the thick of the election campaign. Erasmus also knew him to share Pace's taste for the new learning.

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969

7 conversation] At Mechelen; cf Epp 926 introduction, 952:66–7.

19 Ferdinand] The brother of King Charles, who was still in Spain; cf Epp 948:201n, 970:16–17.

20 Chièvres] Guillaume de Croy; cf Ep 532:30n.

21 Adrian] Adrian of Utrecht, the future pope; cf Epp 171:16n, 608:13n.

29 Baerland] Adriaan Ælius van Baerland; see Ep 760:16n.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND JACOPO BANNISIO, GREETING

Rich as you are in distinctions of every kind, I hear you have been promoted to a new appointment, and one of the highest standing, on which I send you my warmest congratulations, nor have I any doubt that in time to come fortune will requite your exceptional merits even more generously. Here we are storm-tossed by tumults which leave Pan's visitations far behind, such is the melodrama put on by some of the theology faculty. Nor is any of it fought out in open field; all is done by trickery and twists and burrowings under ground. This campaign for the three languages has gone well, and that made them ill. They were afraid that if the New Testament went forward, their authority would slip back. So they tried everything; but they are thinking better of it. The New Testament has appeared; it sells – sells very successfully. One man has had the face to write a pamphlet against me, but it has done him nothing but harm and given me great satisfaction.

Humane studies would emerge triumphant if only we had such a prince in our country as they have in England. The king himself is far from ignorant, extremely intelligent, an open supporter of the humanities, and has silenced all those who were making trouble. The most reverend the cardinal of York is reforming the whole system of study, and by his own generosity issues a sort of general invitation to the love of learning; Cardinal Campeggi does the same, an excellent man and a good scholar. The king's court contains more distinguished men of learning than any university. I observe that German princes too show some respect for learning, encouraged by you and others like you; but we cannot as yet discover how to do likewise. H.S.H. Prince Ferdinand, a young man born (I solemnly aver) for excellence of every kind, is friendly to me and delighted with what I write; others have assured me, and he told me so himself, that he has my book on the prince always by him. They tried to make me his tutor, and he seems to wish for this himself; but many things dissuade me from life at court, and especially my health, which is so uncertain that unless I can manage it as I think best, I shall soon be in trouble. Once dead, I should be no more use to the prince than to myself: as it

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7 Pan's visitations] Cf *Adagia* III vii 3, and for the 'panics' of the recent past see Epp 930:12n, 991:66–7.

13 New Testament] See Ep 864 introduction.

14 one man] Latomus; see Ep 934 introduction.

19 York] Thomas Wolsey; cf Ep 967:40n.

21 Campeggi] See Ep 961 introduction.

22 The king's court] Cf Epp 855, 964 introduction.

28 my book on the prince] Cf Ep 917 introduction.

is, I can do something for him with my pen. My paraphrase on 1 and 2 Corinthians and on Galatians has appeared, and in this field at any rate I win approval from learned and unlearned alike. If opportunity offers, commend me to the illustrious Frederick Duke of Saxony; I wrote to him lately, and suppose he has had the letter. Farewell, best of patrons.

If you have the good fortune to meet this envoy from the English king, Richard Pace, if you do not know him already, get to know him better without fail. He is a most frank and friendly person. He knows both Greek and Latin very well, and is persona grata on account of his good qualities with both the king and the cardinals, and indeed with the pope himself. Farewell once more.

Brussels, 21 May 1519

971 / To Gilles de Busleyden [Brussels? c 21 May] 1519

Clearly contemporary with Epp 968–70, this letter is written from a place to which Erasmus had apparently travelled from Antwerp in the company of Pace. Busleyden, a high dignitary in the Brussels government (cf Ep 686 introduction), was evidently present in the same town, and Erasmus' letter may have been designed to secure an invitation for Pace and himself on the following day. The town was probably Brussels, from where Erasmus dated Ep 970. Busleyden was in Brussels on c 16 April; see de Vocht CTL I 363–4. This letter was published in the *Farrago.*

ERASMUS TO GILLES DE BUSLEYDEN, GREETING

Honoured sir, I came here in hopes of seeing more of Richard Pace, the English king's representative, a man of great attainments in both Greek and Latin; but the inclement weather obliges me to stay at home. I send you as a present a work of Galen's, now speaking better Latin with the aid of Thomas Linacre than ever it did Greek. The last three books will attract you more, for he spends the first three almost entirely in anointing, bathing, and rubbing first the child, then the adolescent, and then the adult. My New Testament has appeared with favourable omens; I should have brought a copy with me, but forgot it. The theologians grow milder, and almost penitent. I dare not go out, nor dare I invite your Excellency to supper with three eggs on the table.

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33 paraphrase] See Epp 916, 956 introductions.
36 lately] Ep 939
42 cardinals] Wolsey and Campeggi

971
5 Galen's] *De sanitate tuenda;* cf Ep 664:29n.

If you do come, the warmth of your welcome will match the modesty of the bill of fare. Farewell. Let me speak with you before I leave.

972 / From Leonardus Priccardus Aachen, 23 May [1519]

This letter was written after Erasmus' visit to Aachen in September 1518 (cf Epp 867:115–48, 904:9) and was published in the *Farrago*, together with Erasmus' answer, Ep 993.

Leonardus Priccardus, probably Prickert, of Aachen, received his MA at Paris in 1493. He was a canon in Aachen, a friend of Jérôme de Busleyden, and Erasmus' host in November 1520. He died in 1541; see de Vocht *Busleyden* 255–6.

LEONARDUS PRICCARDUS TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM HIS MOST HONOURED TEACHER, GREETING

One of the cowl-wearing fraternity was spreading the news here the other day among a rabble of the same kidney that some Englishman, I know not who, was lecturing in Greek at Louvain, who is one hundred times the scholar that Rotterdam is and has found holes in more than a hundred places in his recently printed edition of the New Testament, with the intention of publishing your mistakes in a book which is to appear very shortly. For my part I could not believe this monstrous fellow, for all the wondrous holiness of his appearance. He added that all the theologians are against you and argue in opposition, and that they have decided to drum you out of their university by a unanimous resolution, paying not the least regard to orders from the powers that be, since we must obey God rather than princes.

Such and such-like is the rubbish this beastly creature spews forth, and like some mad dog runs yelping through the town.' And so, dearest Erasmus, I beg you in heaven's name to be of a good courage: now is the moment, having expounded Jerome in an edition of which no man could ever feel ashamed, to copy his character and his unconquerable resolution. Take my word for it, you will not need to expend so much effort in overthrowing this gentile as the labour and the sleepless nights he had to spend on Rufinus

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972

4 Englishman] Edward Lee (cf Ep 843 introduction); his notes on Erasmus' New Testament did not appear in print until February 1520; cf Ep 1037.

10 all the theologians] Cf Ep 930:12n.

12 unanimous resolution] Cf CWE 7 preface.

15 'like some mad dog … town'] Ovid *Ibis* 232

20 on Rufinus] Cf Ep 778:266–9.

and his wiles. Get ready against this Goliath your sling which is God's word and aim straight at his furrowed forehead the rock that is Christ, for love of whom you have undertaken the explanation of Scripture. You will lay low the proud giant on the spot and overthrow all the other gentiles with him, I mean those theologizers who are said to have conspired against you, as the Holy Spirit assures us in these words of Isaiah: 'They are ashamed and confounded all of them together; they are gone into confusion that are contrivers of error.'

Farewell, most desirable Desiderius, and let me have early news of your health and spirits.

From Aachen, 23 May

The precentor, the vice-provost, Schoenraid, and many others send you greetings and their sincere wishes for victory; they are awaiting a letter from you, or at least a note. Likewise my colleague Dr Hasebart sends warmest greetings to you, and Neve.

973 / To Richard Foxe — Antwerp, 25 May 1519

Epp 973–4 were addressed to two English prelates with whom Erasmus had been acquainted since 1506 (cf Epp 187, 192). It rather seems that he had been out of touch with them but was now reminded of them by the agitation of Edward Lee, whom he clearly expected to carry some influence, at least with Foxe (cf Epp 898A introduction, 1099). Both letters were first published in the *Farrago*, Ep 973 without mention of Lee's name. The name was given, however, in the *Epistolae ad diversos*, August 1521, after both opponents had published books each against the other. For Erasmus' presence at Antwerp see Ep 964 introduction.

ERASMUS TO THE RIGHT REVEREND RICHARD, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, GREETING

Right reverend Prelate, if my sincere devotion to you has ever met with your approval, I have but one request to make of you in return. It is that you should not lightly lend credence to the falsehoods about me which like some desperate plague are now rife everywhere. If Edward Lee can bring forward

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22 furrowed forehead] Varro *Menippean Satires* 134; cf Plautus *Epidicus* 609.
26 Isaiah] Isa 45:16
32 precentor, the vice-provost, Schoenraid] Cf Ep 867:117n, 118n, 123n.
34 Hasebart] A native of the diocese of Thérouanne near Saint-Omer, Aegidius Hasebart began his study at Louvain in 1483. He became a canon of Aachen and may have died by 1539.

arguments to prove that his opinion is better than mine, I shall have no quarrel with him. But inasmuch as both here and among his own people, by tongue and pen alike, he and his agents fill every place with malicious rumours, he shows as little care for his own reputation as he does for mine. For a long time he has made no secret of his hostility, although I have never attacked him either in word or deed. He is young, he has a burning desire for reputation; but he would have done better to make a more auspicious start in his pursuit of it. I know your Lordship's wisdom, which does not pass hasty judgments, especially in condemnation. Time will bring all things to light. Truth may be hard-pressed, but she cannot be overcome. If you will use your influence to advise Lee, either to desist entirely from these false accusations, which do his name more harm than mine, or at least to meet me fairly in argument, you will do wonders for his reputation; for now his malice carries him away, like a man frenzied by some mental disease. As for your humble servant, I made some attempt, long ago, to win your good will, but without success; and now I do not ask your good will for myself, but for Lee your countryman. Best wishes to your Lordship, to whom I declare myself entirely devoted.

Antwerp, 25 May 1519

974 / To Thomas Ruthall Antwerp, 25 May 1519

See Ep 973 introduction.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE RIGHT REVEREND THOMAS, BISHOP OF DURHAM, GREETING

Right reverend Father in God, we are told by Aristotle that silence is often the solvent of friendship. Unwilling to run this risk myself, especially with such a friend as you, I send you a paraphrase on the Epistle to the Galatians, in which there is a passage on Paul's criticism of Peter which in my view has never yet been adequately explained by any of the ancient commentators. I am well aware that various rumours about me are in circulation. The Philistines feel that humane studies are raising their heads again, and so

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973

15 Time] Cf Ep 974:10n.

21 some attempt] Cf Ep 187 and the index of CWE 2.

974

3 Aristotle] *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.5.1; cf *Adagia* II i 26.

5 paraphrase] See Ep 956 introduction.

6 passage] See Ep 956:39n.

they leave no stone unturned; but with the passage of time truth will win the day. I have only one request to make of your Lordship: do not lightly give credence to the anti-Erasmus party. They are in full cry just now, as though it were their destiny; but soon they will be ashamed of this distemper, when they return to their senses, as happened to Ajax. My best wishes to your Lordship. Pray continue towards your humble servant the favour you have always shown me.

Antwerp, 25 May 1519

975 / To Antoine Papin — Louvain, [end of May] 1519

This letter and the abbot's reply (Ep 984) were published in the *Farrago* with conflicting dates. Of the two dates that of this letter is less convincing (cf Ep 967A introduction for an analogous case), and it seems best to assume that this letter was written shortly before Ep 984 and perhaps sent with a messenger expected to bring back the requested book.

The rich abbey of Gembloux, south-east of Brussels, possessed a library which was already famous in the Middle Ages. It was further enlarged by Antoine Papin of Ath (d 1541), who had become abbot in 1518 and was chiefly known for his building activity. Gembloux had joined the Bursfeld congregation in 1505, and in 1520 Papin sent some of his monks to St Truiden to help its abbot, Willem Bollart (cf Ep 761:43n), introduce reforms; cf *Gallia Christiana* (Paris 1715–1875) III 566–7; de Vocht *Busleyden* 445; and Ep 1547 for another manuscript which Erasmus borrowed from Gembloux.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE
REVEREND FATHER ANTOINE PAPIN, ABBOT OF GEMBLOUX,
GREETING

From the catalogue of your library, to which I was given access some time ago, I learn that you possess two very ancient manuscripts containing St Cyprian's opuscula. Now I at least have a great desire to give the world an

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10 no stone unturned] Cf *Adagia* I iv 30.

10 passage of time] Cf *Adagia* II iv 17, with a citation from Sophocles' tragedy *Ajax* (646–7). Ajax recovers his senses and despairs at the sight of what he had done during a divinely inflicted fit of madness; cf *Adagia* I vii 46; Bietenholz *History and Biography* 20–1.

975

5 St Cyprian's] This is the first indication that Erasmus planned to edit him. The edition was published by Froben in February 1520 with a dedication to Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci (cf Ep 1000), whereas Papin had to be content with the publication of Epp 975, 984.

edition of this author, freed from mistakes and separated from the works falsely attributed to him; for among all the Latin writers I find no one who comes closer to the true spirit and energy of the apostles. One feels all through that one is listening to a true pastor and one destined for martyrdom. Yet we theologians allow the works of men like this to fall out of fashion, which makes it easier for us to admire the feeble nonsense of our modern authors. I have no doubt that your Lordship, as a fervent supporter of true piety, is also well disposed to religious studies, and to Cyprian, who is a great religious teacher. I do not ask you to do me this kindness without recompense. Your Cyprian shall come back to you, and come back with interest; and in the mean time I will see to it that posterity is duly informed to whom a great part of this benefit is owing. I have long been in your debt for the venison you sent me, and the debt will be far greater if you send me a Cyprian. My best wishes to your Lordship and to the sacred society of your brethren, and I beg them to commend me to Christ in their spiritual prayers.

Louvain, [1 June] 1519

976 / To Johannes Fabri Louvain, [c end of May] 1519

This answer to Ep 953 was published in the *Farrago*. It was clearly written shortly after the encounter with Richard Pace on his way to Frankfurt; cf Ep 968 introduction.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE MOST WORTHY JOHANNES FABRI, VICAR-GENERAL OF THE BISHOP OF CONSTANCE, GREETING

Truly you were born for friendship! Neither the press of business that distracts you on every side nor the great distance that separates us could make you forget your humble friend, and that too when he has been so remiss in his duty towards you. For when I was in Basel, the work of seeing my books through the press left me so little spare time that sometimes I scarcely had the leisure to return the courtesies of a friend and patron of such distinction, to whom it would have been right to render all the services in my power. It showed remarkable generosity to forgive my neglect; and now with great magnanimity you return me thanks. But let me reply to your letter – which was as remarkable for learning as it was for length – in the spirit in which at Basel I habitually return your greetings, and say that of the praise you offer me, which is quite excessive, I will select nothing to keep except the generous spirit which wishes well to my reputation more from bias than good judgment.

I know Beatus Rhenanus dedicated my *Methodus* to you, and I could easily have been quite content had he only told me what he meant to do before I had dedicated the book to the archbishop of Mainz. But my dedication was already in the hands of the public before a copy reached Beatus, to which at that time I had added no dedicatory letter, not wishing to have two dedications in the New Testament, in case someone might complain that I was trying to whitewash two walls out of one bucket. And I had so arranged the shape of my piece that it could either be read separately or be part of the larger undertaking, as I state at the very beginning of that work. In fact, this idea that came into Rhenanus' head was in my opinion rather unhappy, all the more so since he is holding locked up in his desk things of his own, with which he might shed lustre equally on himself and his friends, instead of using other people's. Not but what here too I should approve of Beatus' keenness if the result had not been unfortunate; for I think it is Fortune that is to blame, not his intentions. Anyhow, if the result is not what was intended, I will take steps to put this right on another occasion. Nor shall I so act as to leave posterity in ignorance of our friendship, if any of these trifles of mine ever reach the ears of posterity.

Richard Pace is in capital health and spirits, and a triumphant success among his own people, being a great favourite with their excellent king; he is the king's chief secretary, which is a very important office in England. He was here lately as his king's representative to bring greetings to the Lady Margaret and Ferdinand and to attend the election of the emperor. The sight of him gave me so much pleasure, no one has approached it for many years past. Thomas More is of the Privy Council, and so is Colet; Thomas Linacre

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976

18 *Methodus*] Erasmus had given the newly enlarged *Ratio verae theologiae* to Martens, who published it in November 1518 with a preface to Albert of Brandenburg (Ep 745). Meanwhile Erasmus sent another manuscript of the text, without his preface, to Basel for inclusion in the New Testament. Thus Beatus Rhenanus was not aware of Erasmus' preface to the archbishop when he decided to publish with Froben a separate edition of the *Ratio* (January 1519; reprinted in April), adding a preface of his own addressed to Fabri.

24 whitewash ... bucket] Cf *Adagia* I vii 3.

28 things of his own] Beatus' *Res Germanicae* did not appear until 1531, but for many years he had been acquiring an intimate knowledge of the sources on which his great work was based; cf his editions of Tacitus (1519), the *Panegyrics*, and Velleius Paterculus (1520): BRE Index bibliographicus nos 46, 48–9, 57.

34 friendship] Epp 953, 976 were published in the *Farrago* of October 1519; for a later dedication to Fabri see Ep 1428.

36 Pace] Cf Epp 953:72n, 968 introduction.

42 Privy Council] Colet's appointment to the Privy Council probably dated from January 1517; for More's appointment later that year cf Ep 829:6n.

the royal physician. The king himself is a most promising student of philosophy. The queen loves good literature, which she has studied with success since childhood. Who would not wish to pass his life in such a court? 45

Farewell, my honoured friend. From Louvain, 1519

977 / From Kaspar Schalbe Brussels, 28 May 1519

This letter was reluctantly answered by Ep 981 and published in the *Farrago*. Kaspar Schalbe, probably of Eisenach, matriculated at the University of Erfurt in 1504 and graduated MA in 1510, together with Justus Jonas, in whose company he had just visited Erasmus (cf Ep 963:6n). He was a member of the Erfurt humanist circle and a priest, but subsequently joined the Reformation and married. He is last mentioned in 1526; see Luther w *Briefwechsel* III Ep 587.

TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREATEST OF MEN IN EVERY WAY, FROM KASPAR SCHALBE, GREETING

Through forests infested with brigands and cities infested with plague we have made our way to you, dear Erasmus, Jonas and I, and how well timed, how blest in heaven's name was our arrival! It was a long and tedious journey, but so far are we from regretting it that on our journey, while we were still uncertain where you, the one special pearl of Christendom, were lying hid, we solemnly swore that we would seek you in farthest India or ultimate Thule, to say nothing of Brabant or France. Suffer no more from too low an opinion of yourself – unlike the theologians of the tribe of Aristotle, who all suffer from pride and self-love! If you on your side do not understand how you are the great privilege of this generation given us by Christ himself, I have learnt at home in the silence of my study to know you by your works; and now your living face and your conversation sweet as sugar, as honey, without any affectation (you will be surprised, dear Erasmus) has meant for me almost as much profit as another man might draw from one of your books. I would not inflict my worthless remarks on you did I not wish to have a letter from you as ardently as Jonas, my companion. My life upon it, I could not be torn away from you even if you threatened to drive me away with a stick, unless I have something to bring you back to me, first on my long journey, and still more when the time comes that I return to

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45 court] Cf Epp 855, 964 introductions.

977

8 lying hid] See Ep 963:6n.

11 you] Reading *tute*

18 ardently] Cf Ep 967A introduction.

my far-distant home. Why need I waste words to explain how highly I value this journey of ours? So may God love me, as I would not take in exchange Pactolus ten times o'er or solid mountains of gold. Farewell, great Erasmus, and let me have the favour of an answer, even if I have to wait a long time for it. Farewell once more.

Brussels, 28 May 1519

978 / To Georgius Spalatinus Louvain, 29 May 1519

For the dispatch of this letter, published in the *Farrago*, see Ep 963:6n.

TO THE EXCELLENT THEOLOGIAN GEORGIUS SPALATINUS, CHAPLAIN TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS DUKE OF SAXONY, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

No, nothing in the way of a letter from you has yet reached me, neither in your own name nor in that of his highness the duke, and I fear they may all have gone astray, for surely something would have arrived by now, unless there has been bad faith somewhere. You can see what a long distance lies between us, and just as though we were at war, the enemies of humane studies are on the watch to intercept a letter. So we must be all the more careful not to entrust letters to the first comer. I was most grateful for the medal, which brought me a truly lifelike portrait of your excellent duke. As for his letter, the prince-bishop of Liège was most anxious to see it. I sent it to him, and the medal as well, and never was able to have another word with the man who conveyed them. All the encouragement, the generosity, the support that his highness has lavished on the promotion of liberal studies I regard as a contribution for my special benefit. Everything I saw in Jonas gave me particular satisfaction. My life upon it, I regard him as a chosen

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24 Pactolus ... gold] Cf *Adagia* I vi 75, I ix 15. Pactolus, a river in Lydia, was said to carry gold in its stream.

978

4 letter] When visiting Erasmus, Jonas and Schalbe probably inquired about the fate of Ep 711, from Spalatinus, which had still not arrived; nor had Ep 963, from the elector.

5 I fear ... by now] Translating Allen's reconstruction of a line missing in the printed text

11 medal] Sent by the elector Frederick through Jonas, together with the letter mentioned in the next sentence (cf Ep 963:6n, and for the medal Ep 872:27n), as an acknowledgment for the dedication of Suetonius; cf Epp 586, 979.

12 Liège] Erard de la Marck. He took an interest in Luther (cf Ep 980 introduction), whose cause may well have been mentioned in Frederick's letter.

instrument for the enhancement of Christ's glory in the thick darkness of our times. The gifts of his colleague Schalbe are better known to me from his letters than from the way he speaks. Henceforth the name of Georgius Spalatinus will be enrolled in the list of my special friends, and also among the benefactors to whom I am indebted, whose names I keep not so much on paper as written in my heart. Farewell, dearest Georgius.

Louvain, 29 May 1519

979 / To the Elector Frederick of Saxony Louvain, 30 May 1519

This is the answer to a letter now lost (cf Epp 963:6n, 978:11n). It was carried by Jonas, who delivered it to Frederick at Frankfurt during the gathering of the electors (cf Ep 968 introduction; *Jonas Briefwechsel* Ep 25). A German translation of Ep 979 in the hand of Spalatinus, evidently made for the convenience of his master, is preserved in Weimar. It is somewhat laboured but accurate. Allen printed it in his notes to Ep 939; cf I. Höss in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 46 (1955) 209–13. This letter was printed in the *Farrago*.

TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS FREDERICK, DUKE OF SAXONY FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Most illustrious Prince, the devotion which led me to dedicate to your Highness my edition of the *Lives of the Caesars* has now, in my opinion, been abundantly repaid by the most friendly letter in which you tell me that the gift was not unwelcome. For when I resolved to dedicate that book to you, I had not yet heard as fully as I since have of the enthusiasm with which you aid the humanities in their continuing fight against the supporters of time-honoured ignorance – a fight in which our enemies, for all their efforts, achieve nothing except to render our victory more splendid and their own folly more notorious. As it is, I consider all the interest, the generosity, and the material assistance which you so nobly lavish on the restoration of liberal studies and the advancement and support of their protagonists as entirely bestowed upon myself. Nor need this policy cause you any misgivings. Literature will not be ungrateful: she will confer upon her champion immortal glory in the three historic tongues. The name of Frederick will one day be more famous for his encouragement of learning than for his splendour of lineage. I myself in future shall not be afraid to dedicate other children of

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979

4 *Lives of the Caesars*] by Suetonius; cf Ep 586.

18 other children] No other work by Erasmus is dedicated to Frederick.

my brain to you, since this bold approach of mine has met with success. May Christ the Almighty preserve your Highness as long as possible to be a blessing to your country and to learning and religion.

Louvain, 30 May 1519

980 / To Martin Luther Louvain, 30 May 1519

This answer to Luther's Ep 933 became known at first from the same sources as Ep 948 (for subsequent unauthorized printings see Ep 1033 introduction). When Erasmus himself published this letter in the *Farrago* and perhaps separately in Antwerp (cf NK 2935; Ep 1040), he took care to substitute 'an outstanding person' for 'the bishop of Liège' in line 36, but Mosellanus' editions retained the original text. The trouble caused was considerable. Pope Leo x was alarmed, and Erasmus felt obliged to have recourse to subterfuge (cf Epp 1041, 1143; Pastor VII 398–9). Erard de la Marck suffered the indignity of being investigated by the Louvain theologians but apparently bore Erasmus no ill will (cf Ep 1038). This letter repeats in more cautious terms the position taken by Erasmus in Ep 939:69–91, a letter which he had not himself considered suitable for publication. In Ep 939 he defended Luther; here he primarily defends himself, although the critics were in part identical.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO MARTIN LUTHER

Greetings, dearest brother in Christ. Your letter gave me great pleasure: it displayed the brilliance of your mind and breathed the spirit of a Christian. No words of mine could describe the storm raised here by your books. Even now it is impossible to root out from men's minds the most groundless suspicion that your work is written with assistance from me and that I am, as they call it, a standard-bearer of this new movement. They supposed that this gave them an opening to suppress both humane studies – for which they have a burning hatred, as likely to stand in the way of her majesty queen Theology, whom they value much more than they do Christ – and myself at the same time, under the impression that I contribute something of importance towards this outburst of zeal. In the whole business their weapons are clamour, audacity, subterfuge, misinterpretation, innuendo; if I had not seen it with my own eyes – felt it, rather – I would never have believed theologians could be such maniacs. One would think it was some disastrous infection. And yet this poisonous virus, starting in a small circle,

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6 assistance from me] Cf Ep 961:37, CWE 7 preface.

spread to a larger number, so that a great part of this university was carried away by the spreading contagion of this epidemic paranoia.

I assured them that you were quite unknown to me; that I had not yet read your books and could therefore neither disapprove nor approve anything. I merely told them not to make such an offensive uproar in public before they had even read what you have written, and that this was in their own interests, since their judgment ought to carry great weight. I also advised them to consider whether it was a good plan to produce before a casual audience of laymen a distorted account of views which it would be more proper to refute in print or discuss among specialists, especially since all with one voice speak highly of the author's manner of life. I did no good at all: they are so blinded by their own jaundiced, indeed slanderous, disputations. When I think how often we have agreed terms of peace, and how often on some trifling and rash suspicion they have stirred up fresh trouble! And they regard themselves as theologians. Theologians in this part of the world are unpopular at court; and this too they think is my fault. All the bishops are cordially on my side. These men have no confidence in the printed word; their hope of victory lies entirely in malicious gossip. This I despise, for my conscience is clear. Their attitude to you has softened somewhat. They are afraid of my pen, knowing their own record; and, my word, I would paint them in their true colours, as they deserve, did not Christ's teaching and Christ's example point in quite another direction. Fierce wild beasts are tamed by kindness; these men are driven wild if you do anything for them.

You have people in England who think well of what you write, and they are in high place. There are some here too, the bishop of Liège among them, who favour your views. As for me, I keep myself uncommitted, so far as I can, in hopes of being able to do more for the revival of good literature. And I think one gets further by courtesy and moderation than by clamour. That was how Christ brought the world under his sway; that was how Paul did away with the Jewish law, by reducing everything to allegory. It is more expedient to protest against those who misuse the authority of the bishops than against the bishops themselves; and I think one should do the same with kings. The universities are not so much to be despised as recalled to more serious studies. Things which are of such wide acceptance that they cannot be torn out of men's minds all at once should be met with argument,

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17 university] Cf Epp 930:12n, 961:37n.
29 terms of peace] Cf Epp 946, 1022 introductions.
35 softened] Cf Ep 968:21n.
42 Liège] Erard de la Marck; cf Epp 916, 980 introductions.

close-reasoned forcible argument, rather than bare assertion. Some people's poisonous propaganda is better ignored than refuted. Everywhere we must take pains to do and say nothing out of arrogance or faction; for I think the spirit of Christ would have it so. Meanwhile we must keep our minds above the corruption of anger or hatred, or of ambition; for it is this that lies in wait for us when our religious zeal is in full course.

I am not instructing you to do this, only to do what you do always. I have dipped into your commentary on the Psalms; I like the look of it particularly and hope that it will be of great service. There is a man in Antwerp, the prior of the monastery there, a genuine Christian, who is most devoted to you and was once your pupil, or so he says. He is almost the only one among them all who preaches Christ; the others as a rule preach the inventions of men or their own advantage. I have written to Melanchthon. May the Lord Jesus ever more richly endue you with his spirit every day, for his own glory and the good of mankind. Your letter was not at hand when I wrote this.

Farewell, from Louvain, 30 May 1519

981 / To Kaspar Schalbe Louvain, 30 May 1519

This answer to Ep 977 was published in the *Farrago*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND KASPAR SCHALBE, GREETING

I ask you, very learned friend Schalbe, is this an invitation or an order? You can see that I have scarce enough leisure to maintain my health, you can see how I am overwhelmed by my researches, and yet you demand a letter. So imperative, so uncontrollable a thing affection is, especially between Germans, and if I try to strive against it, I shall get nowhere. And so I send an answer to your letter, but such an answer that I fear you will say you have

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60 commentary] *Operationes in psalmos*, a course of lectures, the first part of which was published in Wittenberg, March 1519 (Luther w v 26–673, Benzing *Lutherbibiliographie* no 516); cf Allen Ep 1127A:96.

62 prior] Jacob Proost (Probst) of Ieper (1486–1562), since 1518 prior of the Augustinian convent in Antwerp. In 1521 he received his licence in theology at Wittenberg. His efforts to propagate the new faith at Antwerp ended with the suppression of his convent in 1522. Subsequently he became a pastor at Bremen; cf de Vocht CTL I 427.

65 Melanchthon] Ep 947

981

5 demand a letter] Cf Ep 941:3n.

not heard from me. Yet if pity for me does not excuse its brevity, at least let it be excused in consideration of my labours for the public good, which must suffer when I am distracted by private duty such as this; to the individual recipients they seem things of no account, but the whole burden falls all at once on me and adds immensely to my load.

Since you do not yield to Jonas in affection, I think it only fair that I should return yours no less than his. I should deplore your taking a journey so long and so perilous simply for my sake, unless you yourself were actually so pleased at having done so. If you have reason for this, I do not grudge you the fruits of it; if it is all imagination, the man who does not feel his troubles is half-way to a cure. But in one point you show yourself a true German. You say that sticks and stones would not drive you away unless you are given something to recall your Erasmus to you even at home in your own country. Have you no shame? Not satisfied with feasting eyes ears and mind on the pleasure of my company (sweet as honey, so you say), must you carry me off entirely? And to a country so far away? Why, what small portion of myself you will carry off, if you take home the picture of my poor body drawn or modelled! The best part of a man like me is to be seen in his books as often as you please, always assuming there is anything at all of mine that is worth looking at. Farewell, dearest Kaspar.

Louvain, 30 May 1519

982 / To Helius Eobanus Hessus Louvain, 30 May 1519

This letter was published in the *Farrago*; for the circumstances of its composition see Ep 963:6n.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO EOBANUS HESSUS THE EMINENT POET, GREETING

Your account of your travels gave me so much pleasure that, after correcting the printer's errors, I have arranged to have it reprinted here. I was delighted to see Jonas and Schalbe. All the same, in sending them here you take little thought for my reputation, of which something has always to be sacrificed as a result of meetings of that kind. Yet you threaten to send me more visitors of the same sort. Having the benefit of their presence, which alone provides the opportunity to write, I write for that very reason more briefly; by other hands it would hardly be safe to write at all, and by these

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982

3 account of your travels] See Ep 870 introduction.

6 reputation] Because no time is left for scholarly work; cf Epp 941:3n, 991.

men it would be useless, for they can tell you everything by word of mouth better than I could in a letter.

I should prefer that those letters of mine had not been published which you added to your poem; I was in mind to publish them shortly, but in enlarged form. Your poem to the count of Nassau I want to see particularly. He is a supporter of humane letters, and on their account of me also. But our princes know how to be liberal with compliments, not coin. I think not of myself in saying this, for I want nothing, being content with my own lot. Farewell, sincerest of friends.

The moment has come to look around you and choose some subject on which there is much to be said, so that you may show posterity your true stature. Round this you will gather little by little everything of distinction that is furnished by your daily reading. You have not forgotten this, and need no advice from me. Farewell again.

Louvain, 30 May 1519

983 / To Johann Lang Louvain, 30 May [1519]

This was clearly one of the letters given to Jonas and Schalbe (cf Ep 963:6n), but unlike the others it was not published in the *Farrago*. It is known from the same source as Ep 872 (Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, MS chart. A 399 f 222 verso), another letter to Lang which Erasmus deemed too bold for publication.

TO THE REVEREND FATHER JOHANN LANG, VICAR OF THE AUGUSTINIANS, WITH SINCERE RESPECTS

Reverend Father, I beg you most emphatically not to judge my feelings towards you by the respect I pay you in the way of correspondence: I am so overwhelmed by letters from all parts that I can scarce find time to read them. I feel great affection for your truly Christian spirit and your defence of true Christianity. I hope that Christ may bless the pious endeavours of yourself and others like you. In these parts the papal party is thus far in full cry, the whole pack being at last of one mind, to do mischief; they are however

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14 poem] The *Hodoeporicon*

15 poem to the count of Nassau] Not known to exist now. Erasmus was clearly thinking of a Netherlandish prince, most likely Henry III of Nassau (cf Ep 829:14n), whom he had met at court – Count Henry was one of the tutors of Prince Charles – and who had shown him favour; cf Ep 1092.

983

5 letters] Cf Ep 941:3n.

9 mischief] Cf Ep 930:12n.

somewhat milder than they were, and I hope they will one day be ashamed of their excesses. The best men all support Luther's idea of liberty; his wisdom, I do not doubt, will ensure that the affair does not issue in discord and rupture. I believe our objective should be to implant Christ in the hearts of men, rather than to fight in the arena with men who wear the mask of Christians, from whom glory or victory will never be won until the tyranny of the Roman See has been abolished, and its hangers-on, Preachers, Carmelites, Minorites – I mean of course the bad ones. I do not see how such an attempt is to be made without grave disorders. Farewell, Father; I am conscious how much I owe to your enlightened kindness.

Louvain, 30 May
Erasmus of Rotterdam

984 / From Antoine Papin Gembloux, 30 May [1519]

This answer to Ep 975 was published in the *Farrago*.

ANTOINE PAPIN, ABBOT OF GEMBLOUX, TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

I send you with the greatest pleasure, my dear Erasmus, such volumes of Cyprian as I have been able to find in our library, wishing well with all my heart to the glory of that most saintly man, and to the unremitting study and research which you devote to the unearthing and correcting of sacred texts. I pray that Christ may prosper and promote your efforts, which cannot be too highly praised; for while those who print books so full of corruptions that they are unintelligible and unreadable discourage many people from these sacred studies, your labours on the other hand will fire many with the wish to pursue them. And so, most learned Father, if there is anything in our possession that might assist your admirable plan, pray regard what is ours as yours. Indeed, if you so wish, our whole library shall come over to you en bloc; we will entrust the whole of it to your sense of honour. Affectionate best wishes, my very dear friend.

Gembloux, 30 May

985 / To Justus Jonas

This letter has been assigned a new date and will now be found as Ep 967A.

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10 milder] Cf Ep 968:21n.

15 tyranny of the Roman See] Cf Ep 872:20n.

17 bad ones] Cf Epp 946:4n, 950:31–5; for other conflicts with Carmelites and Dominicans see the indexes of CWE 5–8.

986 / From Ulrich von Hutten Mainz, 5 June [1519]

In view of the beginning of this letter the recent correspondence between Erasmus and Hutten requires elucidation. Hutten acknowledged three letters from Erasmus received at short intervals. The first was contemporary with Ep 919, sent together with the book for Albert of Mainz. It is now missing. The second he received during the siege of Tübingen, c 20 April. This was probably Ep 951. The third he received at Bad Cannstadt near Stuttgart, shortly before 21 May (cf Hutten *Opera* I Ep 126). This too is missing. The present letter appears to be primarily in reply to the latter. From the beginning of Ep 999 it appears likely that there had been an earlier answer by Hutten with references to Thomas More. This letter was first published by Hutten in his edition of Erasmus' *Ratio verae theologiae* (Mainz: J. Schöffer [June] 1519). Uncertain as to Erasmus' movements, Hutten entrusted it to Richard Pace (cf Ep 968 introduction). Consequently it did not reach Erasmus until after he had read it in print; see the end of Ep 999, where this letter is briefly answered.

HUTTEN TO HIS FRIEND ERASMUS, GREETING

This endless series of letters from you to me I have never set eyes on. One reached me in the army while we were besieging Tübingen, and it was a very short one; you should be more careful in your choice of men to carry this infinite correspondence. But about the man you sent here with the book that was to be offered to the prince you need not worry: he brought everything safely. Nor was I slow in doing what you wanted, and I found the prince keen on it. Your offering required no puff from me; it was its own sufficient advertisement. When he had read it through quickly, 'There's a subject worthy of Erasmus!' he said. 'May he be with us many years to write like that many times!' And he expressed the warmest wishes for your welfare, for he has high hopes of you, knowing what light you throw on the field of learning and how much you help all who wish to learn. After that, Stromer arrived, for he had married a wife in Saxony and had not followed the court immediately; and while he admires all your work more than one might think

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986

5 the book] The *Ratio verae theologiae,* sent for Albert of Brandenburg; cf Ep 968:4n.

13 Stromer] Heinrich Stromer (cf Ep 578 introduction). He had married Anna Hummelshain at Leipzig on 24 January 1519; see G. Wustmann *Der Wirt von Auerbachs Keller* (Leipzig 1902) 28–9.

possible, he worships this book above everything. As for Gregor Kopp, the prince's second physician, you have made him a complete Erasmian: he has your books in his hands constantly and reads them more greedily almost than anyone. This gives many people reason to be angry with you: they say you are turning our physicians into divines. You are also coming into disrepute with the lawyers, for sweeping off some men who were all set for their Bartholus; and now they have dropped the law altogether and are having a delightful time reading your books. Having produced the same disastrous effect on the enthusiasm of the theologists, can you wonder if they are not fond of you? They have a sort of right to do this much; it is rare enough for them to do the right thing.

There was a rumour here for a whole month, and I dare say it even reached you, that I had been killed in action. This really was a triumph for those gentry; they were simply delighted. If anything had happened to me, I am sure they would have said it was Christ's answer to their prayers, for I know already that they pray for some harm to befall me. I read Latomus' dialogue, which made me laugh. You must not think you wasted the time you spent in writing your *Apologia;* it did me all the good in the world.

As for what you say about Ferdinand, I am delighted to hear that he loves liberal studies even at his age. You raised my spirits: it made me hope to see the rulers of the world allying themselves with us against barbarism. Cardinal Albert takes our part valiantly; he still treats me generously, and he has a great desire to see you. You are not doing the right thing by not offering to join him; you do not believe me when I keep on proclaiming the very generous feelings he has for you. He has entrusted me with a present, intended to return the honour you have done him. It is a silver-gilt cup, not

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16 Kopp] Gregor Kopp (Coppus) of Kalbe, Saxony, was registered at the University of Leipzig in 1500. Like Stromer he was physician to Albert of Brandenburg. At about this time he had helped Hutten with his treatise *De guaiaci medicina* (Mainz: J. Schöffer April 1519); see Hutten *Opera* I 230; Luther w *Briefwechsel* II Ep 257.

22 Bartholus] Bartolo of Sassoferrato, d c 1357. A legal school was called after him, and his name became a synonym for legal professionalism.

31 Latomus' dialogue] *De trium linguarum et studii theologici ratione;* see Ep 934 introduction.

34 Ferdinand] Cf Ep 917 introduction; the following comments may have encouraged Hutten to approach Ferdinand direct; see Ep 1055.

41 cup] A silver-gilt 'loving-cup' (line 45) or a so-called *Deckelbecher,* an artifact popular in the sixteenth century consisting of two identical cups each of which could serve as lid for the other. It reached Erasmus after considerable delay (cf Epp 999 and 1009), and in the last of his wills he left it to Hieronymus Froben (cf Allen XI 364). There is no trace of it now, and of the thirty cups in gold and silver

only very heavy but still more admirable for the workmanship. You will think it a gift worthy of a prince. Though he himself says this is a present for you while you give him a wide berth, and that if you ever come a little closer, he will have much bigger things to give you. He calls this a loving-cup. Personally, I do not know where to send it; they say you are setting off for England. Write and tell me what you want done with the cup, and also what your plans are.

The war went off very well. We have freed Germany from serious danger and widespread anxiety. Why should we be much concerned if the man is still alive? We have stripped him of everything; his life can only be miserable. You shall read the whole story one day. At Stuttgart I met Reuchlin, in a position of great anxiety. The worthy father was afraid of the fury of the troops. But I had arranged with Franz, my chief, to put in a word with the generals in command, so that if Stuttgart had to be taken by assault, orders should be issued throughout the army that Reuchlin's house was not to be touched. You can't think what a great and wonderful service he supposes this to be, though I know perfectly well it was simply my duty to see that such a learned and excellent man should suffer no indignity. In this business particularly Franz showed what a great man he is; for a long time we have never had his like in Germany, and he deserves to be handed down to posterity in something from your pen too. My own hope is that this nation must gain greatly in repute from such a man. There is nothing we admire in Antiquity that he does not zealously imitate. He has the most lively wisdom, lively eloquence too; tackles everything with energy; so tireless that the greatest general would not match him. He never says or does anything mean, and is now engaged on perhaps the most noble enterprise of all. May

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in Erasmus' estate only two are known today; see E. Major *Ein Becher aus dem Besitz des Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Basel 1929; reprinted from Historisches Museum Basel *Jahresberichte und Rechnungen* 1928).

46 for England] Cf Ep 964 introduction.

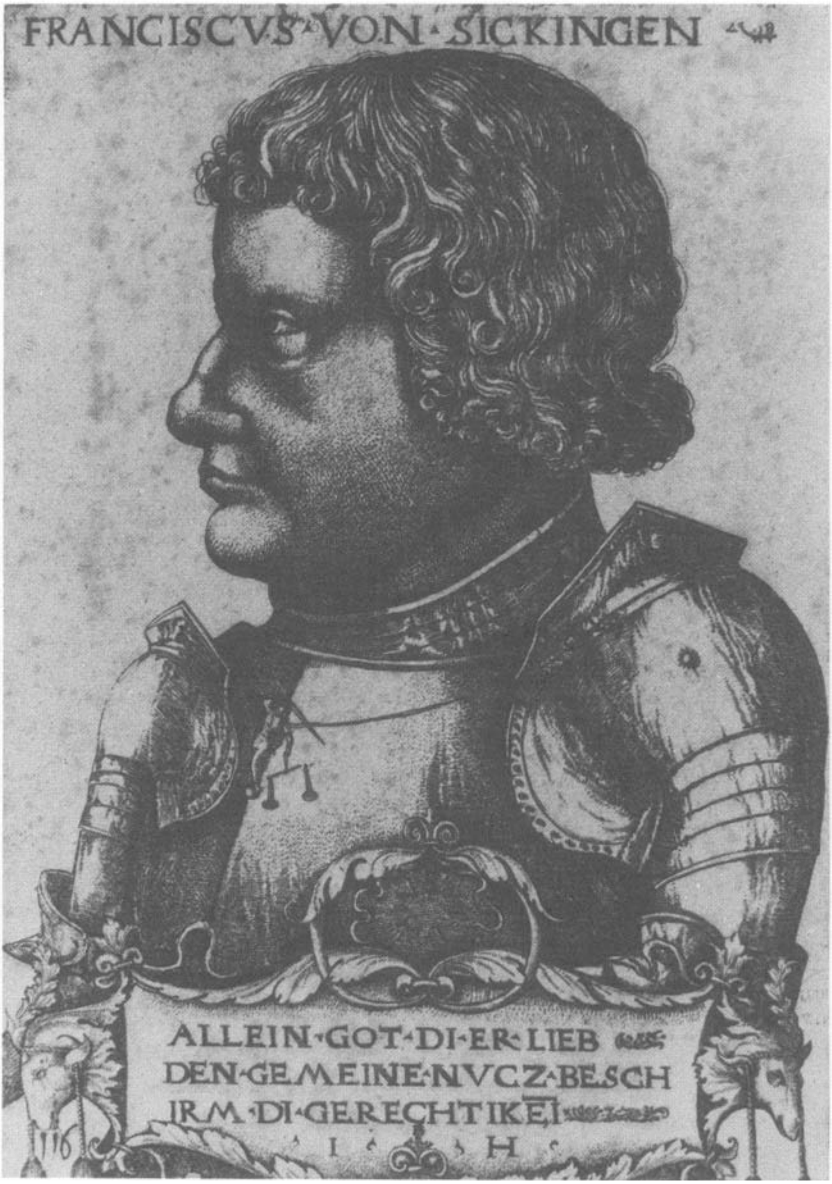
49 the war] Cf Ep 923:27n.

51 man] Ulrich of Württemberg

52 Stuttgart] The town had surrendered on 7 April to the army of the Swabian League under the command of Duke William of Bavaria. Fearing a sack, the aged Reuchlin had buried his books, not knowing, of course, that Hutten and Franz von Sickingen had taken measures to protect him. But the troubles of Stuttgart, and those of Reuchlin, continued; eventually Reuchlin moved to Ingolstadt; cf Ep 1129; Ludwig Geiger *Johann Reuchlin* (Leipzig 1871) 459–61; RE Epp 282–6.

54 Franz] Franz von Sickingen; cf Ep 582:30n.

67 enterprise] Immediately after the campaign in Württemberg Sickingen and his followers were hired by the Hapsburgs and joined an army posted at Höchst


FRANCISCVS·VON·SICKINGEN
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Franz von Sickingen
Engraved portrait by Hieronymus Hopfer, c 1540
Lutherhalle, Wittenberg

God Almighty prosper my hero's plans! While I was there he talked in the most friendly fashion with Reuchlin, who in greeting us called him the Scourge of God. Franz said he would give us all the help he could. In a word, you can see what a support he might be to us; above all, he will not let Reuchlin be suppressed. This must be our great reason for confidence.

Farewell, and let me have as soon as possible a long letter on our common interests. How dare you complain that I do not answer, when your own letters are so short? Farewell once more.

Mainz, 5 June

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987 / From Guillaume Budé Paris, 10 June [1519]

This letter, published in the *Farrago*, answered both Erasmus' Epp 930 and 954. It was answered by Ep 1004.

BUDÉ TO ERASMUS, GREETING

Luis Vives, a most promising student of the humanities, as I discovered from his conversation, seems to me a keen supporter both of your reputation and of mine, and such an unusually courteous and scholarly person might, I think, prove a most effective link for the future, to support our friendship and hold it together if ever, as happens in human life, any small disagreement, any trace of suspicion I would rather say, should come between us. That any such thing has come between us up to now I for my part will never admit, not even to the priest to whom I entrust the care of my soul.

In passing I must say a word about your letter, which reached me while I was out of town, in which you reassure me quite unneccessarily that you always speak very highly of me, and assert that you are dissatisfied with that letter of yours which you find so long and I so short, for this reason if no other that it seems to have given me some offence. In hopes of relieving you of this suspicion once and for all, since you do not believe me whether I say yes or no, as far as I am concerned you are welcome to let your printers have it, if you see no objection; I read it without a trace of ill feeling. If you do not yet know the man I am, I should like to introduce to you even at this late date my somewhat astringent character: I do not like a too respectful approach with a touch of the toady in it, nor would I willingly keep up a friendship on the basis of 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours,' any more than I have learnt to put resentment and bitterness on paper. I would rather be accused of untimely humour and some lack of discretion than of the opposite fault. I think it has some reference to this that you say we should 'Cretan with Cretan stand,' as if my views differed from yours or I did not show myself ready to approve what you are trying to do. For my part, as ill luck would have it, I declared war long ago on the lovers of barbarism whom you know so well and engaged them fiercely, but am no longer able to pursue the battle, nor can I throw my weight as I would wish on the side of the good men whose commanding general you are; as though I no longer took sides, I neither give aid to the one side nor harrass the other, although I hate one lot and wish victory to their opponents. This is simply to be a useless burden on the earth as I sink towards old age, as if one were watching a play. As for the question you so much wanted an answer to, what my intentions are, as you put it in one of your notes, I am ashamed to confess my inner feelings; but one thing I do wish, that you should one day be able to know what I feel about the advocacy of all those who professed to be defending scholarship as we understand it.

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near Frankfurt, lest the electors should be tempted by French offers; cf Epp 968 introduction, 1055.

987

2 Vives] Little is known about his brief visit to Paris at this time. On his return he carried this letter for Erasmus (cf Ep 992:2).On 28 June he was not yet back in Louvain; cf Ep 991:93.

11 out of town] In Montpellier (cf Ep 924:20n). In the following comments Budé makes no distinction between Epp 930 and 954.

13 letter of yours] Ep 906

Please write and let me know if the archbishop who loves you so dearly has sent you anything; for this was done without my knowledge, for good or ill. What follows from this is such that I think it better to stop here and bid you farewell.

Paris, 10 June

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24 'Cretan with Cretan stand'] Cf Ep 916:412n.

32 burden on the earth] Homer *Iliad* 18.104

35 notes] Now missing, or in a passage not published by Erasmus. There may be another reference to this in the postscript of Ep 929.

39 archbishop] Through Budé, Archbishop Etienne Poncher had encouraged Erasmus to state his terms for a move to Paris (cf Ep 810:408–19), but it does not seem likely that Erasmus actually did write to Poncher, nor that he received a letter from the archbishop. On the other hand, the royal invitation had recently been repeated by Louis Ruzé; cf Ep 926:37n.

988 / From Albert of Brandenburg

Frankfurt, 13 June 1519

This letter answers Ep 968 and is answered in turn by Ep 1009; all three were published in the *Farrago*.

ALBERT, BY DIVINE MERCY CARDINAL PRIEST OF THE MOST HOLY ROMAN CHURCH WITH THE TITLE OF ST CHRYSOGONUS, ARCHBISHOP OF MAINZ AND MAGDEBURG, PRINCE-ELECTOR, PRIMATE, AND ADMINISTRATOR OF HALBERSTADT, MARGRAVE OF BRANDENBURG, ETC, TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Heavy indeed and most necessary on behalf of all men, most learned Erasmus, is the business which burdens us at this time with such anxious care, for it is no private concern that occupies us, but we are compelled to perform our duty of choosing an emperor for the whole world; yet all the time we are actively and willingly mindful of you. Nothing therefore can come before us so difficult that it can interrupt the reading of your most scholarly letters when and where soever they arrive. And we beg you sincerely to interrupt us frequently in this fashion; for be assured that we rejoice whenever we receive any letter from you.

Though this is true of you especially, yet we take no little pleasure at the same time in the acquaintance of scholars from whatever source. And so Richard Pace, envoy of the invincible king of England, who is recommended to us in the first place by his own merit (which was previously not unknown to us, for we had often heard it spoken of by learned men), secondly by letters from the king his master and the cardinal of York, and lastly by your testimonial, is dear to us and we give him a warm welcome. Continue upon your course of enriching Scriptural studies and divine theology with your admirable endeavours for thus it will come to pass that the most barbarous nations on earth will be barbarous no longer. With that end in view we wish you all felicity and such success as your heart desires, and we promise you our aid and comfort towards it.

It is a pleasure to show affection for our friend Hutten, if for no other reason, because we understand him to be a friend of yours. As regards the book that you have dedicated to us, there is no cause for concern; we were

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21 York] Thomas Wolsey, the English chancellor, who had given Pace a letter of recommendation, received prompt but unenlightening reports on interviews Pace had with Albert of Brandenburg at Mainz and Frankfurt between 8 and 12 May; cf LP III 296–7, 300.

not offended that some other person had given it another dedication, since you yourself had previously intended it for us. We shall shortly be sending a present in return. Till then farewell.

From the imperial city of Frankfurt, 13 June 1519

989 / From Nicolas Bérault Paris, 20 June [1519]

For the year date of this letter cf Ep 925 introduction. It was published in the *Farrago* and is probably the letter acknowledged by Erasmus in Allen Ep 1002:41–2.

TO THE MOST ELOQUENT THEOLOGIAN ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM FROM NICOLAS BÉRAULT, GREETING

Some days ago, most learned Erasmus, I gave that excellent and civilized man Francesco Calvo letters for you from Budé, Deloynes, and myself, and I have no doubt that he has surely and certainly delivered them, though perhaps with some delay. And now, though I have nothing else to say, since there is a courier setting out for your part of the world, I could not refrain from writing something in the way of a letter to you, especially because your friend Wilhelm Nesen suggested it and has been obstinately urging me to write; at the same time, I wish to make it clear how much we all look forward to a letter from you, and to induce you to write to that excellent and most learned man, Guillaume Hué, dean of Notre Dame. He is a man who in these lists, if I may use the word, would rather receive a challenge from you than be the challenger; he has considerable experience already in authorship of many kinds and is so devoted to the higher learning, and especially to Scriptural studies, that we have absolutely nobody whom we could set above him. On his behalf I send you greetings provisionally. And I further beg you not to reject the friendship of such an honourable and learned man, who deserves your friendship on many counts, but for this reason especially that he seeks it so keenly and I had almost said, greedily; he would pay a high price for it, were not the friendship of Erasmus open to all and to be had without paying

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31 another dedication] Cf Epp 968:4n, 976:18n.

33 present] See Ep 986:41n.

989

4 letters] Cf Epp 819 introduction, 925:3n.

7 courier] Probably Haio Herman of Friesland; cf Ep 1002.

12 Hué] Guillaume Hué (d 31 July 1522) was a canon of Paris with humanist sympathies. Since 1518 he had been dean of the cathedral chapter and thus one of the highest ranking prelates in Paris.

anything. Deloynes, Ruzé, and the others send their greetings. Budé, as I write this, is in the country with his wife and children; he will be back in town before long, as soon, I suppose, as his lady, who is expecting a child, has had her baby and increased the family of Budé. Farewell.

Paris, 20 June [1518]

990 / To John Claymond — Louvain, 27 June 1519

John Claymond (c 1468–1537) of Frampton, Lincolnshire, had been a fellow and later president of Magdalen College, Oxford, until 1517, when Richard Foxe, bishop of Winchester, persuaded him to take charge of his new foundation, Corpus Christi. It seems that Erasmus knew him only indirectly and that this letter, which was published in the *Farrago* shortly after it was written, was an attempt to establish a personal connection.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE DISTINGUISHED THEOLOGIAN DR JOHN CLAYMOND, GREETING

He is an exceptionally wise man, is my lord Richard, bishop of Winchester, and has always been universally esteemed as such; but let me tell you, good doctor Claymond, who do so much honour to the ranks of theologians, no act of his has ever proved this more clearly than his consecrating the magnificent college which he has set up at his own expense expressly to the three chief tongues, to humane literature, and to classical studies. What greater service could he have rendered to his fellow men, what monument could more rightly recommend his name to the undying memory of mankind? So should a pillar of the church, so should a bishop act. And it is a great joy to me that their eminences Thomas the cardinal of York and Cardinal Campeggi and (not to become tedious by listing the other names) Henry the Eighth himself, a monarch second to none of our time in the gifts of true kingship, have whole-heartedly supported his enterprise. Their authority can suppress with ease the shameless curs that would bark at his heels; their generosity supplies in good measure the resources that attract energetic teachers and meet the needs of academic freedom.

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25 baby] Probably his second daughter; see M.-M. de la Garanderie *La Correspondance* 185 n 1.

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7 college] Cf Ep 965:12n. The new college was not, however, strictly speaking trilingual, unless Hebrew were regarded as implicit in the study of divinity.

12 Thomas] Wolsey; cf Ep 967:40n. For Campeggi see Ep 961.

16 suppress] Cf Ep 948:194–200.

Many parts of the world owe their renown to some famous monument. It was the vast Colossus gave Rhodes its fame, Caria owes it to the sepulchre of Mausolus, Memphis to the Pyramids, Cnidus to its statue of Venus, Thebes to its magical figure of Memnon. I foresee that in days to come this college, like some most holy temple sacred to all that is best in literature, will be reckoned all over the world to be one of the chief glories of Britain, and that more men will be drawn to Oxford by the spectacle of that library rich in the three tongues, where no good author is lacking and no bad one finds a place, than ever were attracted to Rome in olden days by the prospect of so many marvels.

And furthermore, it is in my view another argument for the wisdom of the excellent bishop's plan that he should have chosen you in particular, a man whose integrity is nothing new but known from long experience, as the president of his new college. For one thing, you can bring the weight of your personal authority to the teaching of these subjects, and for another, you are in your sole person proof enough that culture and character go well together. For, as a result of misbehaviour by the few, those who do not wish as well as they should to the humanities maintain that studies of this sort corrupt human life and wean men away from the Christian religion. And there are among us, especially in Germany, some younger men whose life is honourable enough, but whose idea of defending liberal studies is to hold forth against their opponents with the eloquence of fishwives.

Personally I do not deny that one must make allowances for youth and, if you like, for nationality, especially when men are roused by such bitter opposition that no language would seem harsh enough for their adversaries. Yet my view is that your mild and serious, scholarly and cautious attitude will have far more effect; even those who were lately protesting so loudly and taking the field in opposition will be persuaded thereby to return to their own lines and will be turned from bitter enemies into loyal champions and

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19 monument] The following enumeration is inspired by the traditional seven wonders of the ancient world, which include the first three monuments here mentioned. The fourth contained a celebrated statue of Venus by Praxiteles. An enormous statue of the mythical king Memnon of Ethiopia was the pride of Thebes in Egypt.

25 library] Foxe endowed it with a rich collection of books, including Reuchlin's *De rudimentis hebraicis* (Pforzheim 1506) (see Allen VI xx). Claymond was himself a great benefactor to the library; cf J.R. Liddell in *The Library* 4th series 18 (1938) 385–416.

38 younger men] Cf Ep 967:115–23.

40 fishwives] Literally 'out of carts'; cf Ep 949:26n.

defenders. The man who by his own moderation makes the humanities attractive to everyone is far more effective than he who is battling continually with their stubborn and malicious opponents. Is there any form of calumny I have not suffered at the hands of these devotees of barbarism? The disturbance they have excited, the uproar they have aroused, the pits they have dug for innocent feet! I for my part was not wholly destitute of teeth and claws; I had my weapon, had I been willing to use it, nor am I ignorant of the best way of handling monsters of this kind. But I thought it would be more pleasing to Christ, and at the same time more conducive to the advance of liberal studies, either to pacify the protesting party by a policy of moderation or even to give way, until in course of time the energy of these blockheads evaporates or they see the light of their own accord. Nor have I any reason as yet to regret this course.

I would not have dared to interrupt you, most learned Claymond, with a letter, had not Cuthbert Tunstall, Thomas More, and Richard Pace extolled with one accord your habitual readiness to be of use, being a man as approachable as you are upright. Encouraged by them, I have taken the liberty of writing in the running hand which I use to keep pace with the flow of my ideas. Farewell.

Louvain, 27 June 1519

991 / To Tranquillus Andronicus Parthenius [Louvain], 28 June 1519

This letter is addressed to Tranquillus Andronicus Parthenius (Fran Trankvil Andreis) of Trogir west of Split on the Dalmatian coast (1490–1571). After studies in Italy he appeared in Vienna and Ingolstadt (1517–18) and lectured in Leipzig on Quintilian (1518; cf Ep 911:47–9). Probably travelling by way of Erfurt, the point of departure for German pilgrims to Erasmus (cf Ep 963:6n), he arrived in the Netherlands apparently without a letter of introduction and failed to make contact with Erasmus either at Louvain or at Antwerp. This letter seems to be the only document of his visit (cf Ep 947:3n; de Vocht CTL I 321–3). It was evidently written after the Dalmatian had left in anger, perhaps for Paris (line 93n). To placate him, Erasmus offered such excuses as the circumstances seemed to permit, together with frank reproaches for the University of Louvain, and published this letter in the *Farrago*. Over the next twenty-five years Andronicus served as a diplomatic agent in the Balkans, partly on behalf of Ferdinand I. See *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* (Zagreb 1955–) I 101–2.

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52 uproar] Cf Ep 930:12n.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO TRANQUILLUS PARTHENIUS OF DALMATIA, GREETING

I had written from Antwerp, most learned Tranquillus, telling them, if you had not already left, to detain you in Louvain for a few days until my return or, if that should be impossible, at least to make sure that you did not depart without speaking with me first; and I said I would pay the expense of your longer stay out of my own pocket. But you were in a hurry to go and left before my letter arrived; so when I returned to Louvain, I found instead of my friend Tranquillus two poems, both equally learned and both, it must be admitted, full of complaints; for one showed that when you left you were annoyed with the university and the other that you were annoyed with me. In one of them you accuse us all of some sort of barbarous discourtesy because, when you wished to give us a display of your learning and a lesson in literature, you were given no opportunity, though other universities invite people by the prospect of reward to do just what you offered to do gratis of your own free will. In the other you upbraid me as a crass Batavian who has no use for the Graces, for having refused you an interview, when the passion to set eyes on me had brought you from afar by most difficult journeys into an unknown land. I will answer on behalf of us both, but first let me plead my own case.

To begin with, my dear sir, it is the absolute truth that at the time I was in Antwerp, absorbed in what I found very troublesome business. But never have I been so busy as to have refused an interview to a man like yourself, had I either known you personally or been given an accurate picture of you by someone else. Instead of a young scholar, friendly and modest, they had described to me some barbarian bombastic character, a Davus or a Geta, some itinerant busybody – a sort of man from whom I have an aversion such as you would hardly credit, and by whom I am attacked oftener than I could wish and than conduces to the progress of my work. This was due to confusion with another man; for at that time a different person of this kind was seeking publicity in Antwerp. For this sort of visitor therefore, who is both tiresome and time-consuming, I am sometimes not at home, and again I cannot find the time, another day I may not be awake, like the man in the old story whose eyes were closed, but not to everybody. If you find this barely civil, I think it much more uncivil, while listening to the nonsense these men talk, to neglect

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991

3 Antwerp] Cf Ep 964 introduction.

16 crass Batavian] Cf *Adagia* III ii 48, IV vi 35.

26 a Davus or a Geta] Barbarian slaves in the comedies of Terence

33 old story] Of the husband, who sometimes connived at his wife's misbehaviour and sometimes was inconveniently wide awake; cf *Adagia* I vi 4.

the pressing demands of so many scholars who are always asking me for some assistance in the interest of liberal studies. Had anyone, I will not say painted you to me in your true colours, but merely drawn me an outline, I should have hastened to greet you of my own accord.

So much in my own behalf; it remains to give some answer in the name of Louvain University. You know it is the first and greatest thing in any project to choose the right time to start. You could not have arrived in Louvain at a more unfortunate moment to lecture in the humanities, just when a recent conspiracy was at its height – a conspiracy of certain persons who seem to have vowed their own perdition if they cannot extinguish liberal studies. For this is their idiotic conviction, that if these studies are allowed to acquire any standing, it will mean the weakening of their own authority. All over the world they see not only universities but even princes' courts infected with this new sort of learning; so they strive all the more to keep Louvain immune from the contagion. The whole thing has no support from all the best people. For this disorder took its rise from the most unsubstantial beginnings, in fact from the unfounded suspicions of two or three men. Then, as they are not ashamed to be inconsistent even in a bad cause, they pursue their course for far more flimsy reasons than they used at first. In fact, the whole play depends on two or three leading actors; so you must not spread resentment at this behaviour over the whole university. These men's pertinacity has convinced some people, their impudence has swept others away; some join the cause to win their favour, some out of hope of gain or fear of loss play their part in a production of which they do not approve. The majority clamour for no better reason than because they see many others clamouring. Those who hear the noise from a distance think that the movement has public opinion behind it, especially when they see it advertised with sounding titles like University, Rector, and Faculties. Anyone who watches the play from close at hand or even is familiar in the wings perceives that the whole contraption is moved by two or three. Personally, I would sooner impute such disturbances to a Homeric Ate, to Pan the poets' god or Tisiphone or one of the Furies, or even (as astrologers do) to some untoward concurrence of the heavenly bodies, than I would to the general will.

Another thing, I suspect, that may have done you harm is the innocent way in which you advertised your enthusiasm for me. The chief actors in this

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44 recent conspiracy] Cf Ep 930:12n.

66 Ate] Cf Ep 948:27n. The following references to Pan (cf Ep 970:7) and Tisiphone, one of the three Erinyes, etc may have been added to obscure the allusion to Jan Briart Atensis.

play think it an insult to themselves if Erasmus is well spoken of. There may perhaps have been people who suspected that you had been put up to attack the theologians with the freedom allowed in verse. I never yet saw any group of men give more free rein to their own suspicions. A line of yours is going the rounds in Louvain like a proverb: 'Erasmus' eloquent heart I might not see.' Why they should laugh at this, I do not quite know: it is not such a bad line as to deserve ridicule, nor is their Erasmus so notoriously tongue-tied that it is a nine days' wonder if one of his friends calls him eloquent. There may be ill-natured people here, but not, I think, perverse enough to take pleasure simply in the fact that things have not gone quite as you intended. But let us leave them to their pleasure, such as it is. I should like to see you take a more kindly view of this university of ours, which has its able men and its good young scholars, if only ability were rewarded, and there were not such violent opposition to more liberal subjects. If I gave you a personal description of these godlike characters, it would not surprise you to find ancient barbarism blessed with such champions. They are said to be the target of some attack you are planning; and this, my dear Tranquillus, I think such a bad idea that I would rather think it cannot be true. They deserve it, you will say. So be it: let them deserve to swing for it – but I should like you to remember the behaviour proper to professed supporters of the literature that prides itself on the name of 'the humanities.'

Mind you give my greetings to Luis Vives; if he remembers me, I am delighted at his good fortune and envious if he has forgotten me. For I hear he is overjoyed at his escape from this citadel of barbarism, as the phrase goes, and the recovery of his old freedom to work. Farewell, dearest Tranquillus.

28 June 1519

992 / From Guillaume Budé — Paris, 30 June [1519]

This letter enlarges on points made in Ep 987; it was answered by Ep 1004 and published in the *Farrago*. Budé entrusted it to Henricus Glareanus and Jacobus Ceratinus (cf line 5n), who seem to have visited Erasmus about this time. Nothing certain is known about their visit to Louvain; cf O.F. Fritzsche *Glarean* (Frauenfeld 1890) 27–9.

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93 Vives] He had recently gone to Paris (cf Ep 987:2n). Thus, unlike Erasmus, he was, temporarily at least, in the enviable position of being able to forget Louvain, that centre of anti-humanist agitation.

95 as the phrase goes] Apparently an echo of Cicero *Pro Fonteio* 20.44

GUILLAUME BUDÉ TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

I had lately sent you a letter by the hand of Luis Vives, a good scholar – to judge by the two conversations I had with him – and much attached to you. But now that I have had a visit from Glareanus, accompanied by Jacobus Ceratinus, who knows Greek and Latin and professes both, I could not escape writing you this letter, they being not unwilling to wait in my house in the mean time. While I was abroad, I had two letters from you almost in the same words, and certainly very similar in contents. You seem to disown that long letter you wrote me and to reject it as fit only for the jakes, for this reason above all, because it made me annoyed with you. In this you are quite wrong, as you have been wrong before on other matters, and so I made clear before my departure in a letter beginning 'I have seen the comments you wrote on my letter.' If you do not believe me even now, you are welcome to send your letter and mine together to the printers, and I assure you it will be with my good will. I do not think I have anything to fear from the opinion of educated men; but the tendency of that would be to confirm in any intelligent and open-minded reader the opinion, were the contents of these letters to be made public, that there was an element of disloyalty in our friendship, and that we were writing like this for effect. It is true that I enjoy my joke when I am writing, and writing perhaps without restraint, but I endure without reluctance, or at least without resentment, if I am paid in my own coin, even coin of rather dubious value. Being as I am fond of pleasantry by nature, I have absolutely no wish to be excused from listening to those who repay one joke with another. In fact, if I wish to be thought an honest man, it follows, I presume, that I must not take it amiss if people make jokes at my expense that are reasonable and witty.

Do understand, I beg you, that I take the opposite view from you about exchanges of this sort in writing, between such men at least as have some experience of life. You think they undermine a firm friendship or are afraid that others will think so; in my own opinion they confirm and strengthen it at all points. You must realize that no one is further from literature than I am now. As a result, I value my life at less than half what it is worth and wish for

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992

2 letter] Ep 987

5 Ceratinus] Jacob Teyng of Hoorn, hence called Ceratinus, a promising young scholar; cf Ep 622:34n.

7 two letters] Epp 930, 954

9 long letter] Ep 906; cf Epp 924, 954.

12 letter beginning] Ep 915

31 I am now] Immersed in court duties and diplomacy; cf Epp 924:20–1, 987:27–9.

nothing except leave to return to the use of my own wits, no matter what the effect on my finances. I relieve you of every vestige of suspicion that I am mildly annoyed, so you need no longer indulge in those unnecessary assurances that you speak of me with respect and so forth. Farewell.

Paris, 30 June

I fear I am delaying Glareanus and his companion longer than I should. Why, I wonder, have you never answered the letter I mentioned just now?

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39 letter] Ep 915; at the beginning of Ep 930 Erasmus made it clear that he had no intention of answering it, but see Ep 1004.

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENTS
WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED
SHORT TITLE FORMS
INDEX

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENTS

842 **To Helias Marcaeus** [Cologne? 1518?] 2
843 **To Maarten Lips** [On the Rhine?], 7 May 1518 3
844 **To Johann Maier von Eck** Basel, 15 May 1518 27
845 **From Thomas More** [England, c May 1518] 37
846 **From Pieter Gillis** Antwerp, 24 May [1518] 37
847 **To Pierre Barbier** Basel, 31 May 1518 39
848 **To Thomas More** Basel, 31 May [1518] 39
849 **From Peter Gillis** Antwerp, 19 June [1518] 42
850 **From Johannes Thurzo** [Wrocław, c 20 June 1518] 45
851 **From Caspar Ursinus Velius** Wrocław, 20 June 1518 47
852 **From Maarten van Dorp** Louvain, 14 July 1518 49
853 **To Jean Le Sauvage** Basel, 15 July 1518 54
854 **From Ambrogio Leoni** Venice, 19 July 1518 56
855 **To Paolo Bombace** Basel, 26 July 1518 61
856 **To Willibald Pirckheimer** Basel, [July–August] 1518 66
857 **From Udalricus Zasius** Freiburg, 13 August 1518 69
858 **To Paul Volz** Basel, 14 August 1518 72
859 **To Udalricus Zasius** Basel, 22 August 1518 91
860 **To Antonio Pucci** Basel, 26 August 1518 95
861 **To Osvaldus Myconius** Basel, 26 August 1518 98
862 **To Bonifacius Amerbach** Basel, 31 August 1518 99
863 **From Jakob Spiegel** Augsburg, 31 August 1518 103
864 **From Leo** x Rome, 10 September 1518 106
865 **From Paolo Bombace** Rome, 1 October 1518 108
866 **From Adolf Eichholz** Cologne, 6 October 1518 111
867 **To Beatus Rhenanus** Louvain, [first half of October] 1518 112
868 **To Ambrogio Leoni** Louvain, 15 October [1518] 126
869 **To Guillaume Budé** Louvain, 15 October 1518 130
870 **To Conradus Mutianus Rufus** Louvain, 17 October 1518 131
871 **To Johannes Draconites** Louvain, 17 October 1518 133
872 **To Johann Lang** Louvain, 17 October [1518] 134
873 **To Heinrich Beyming** Louvain, 17 October [1518] 141
874 **To Helius Eobanos Hessus** Louvain, 19 October 1518 141
875 **To Johann Werter** Louvain, 19 October 1518 143
876 **To Justus Jonas** Louvain, 19 October [1518] 145
877 **To Wolfgang Faber Capito** Louvain, 19 October [1518] 147
878 **To [Hermann von Neuenahr]** Louvain, 19 October 1518 149
879 **To Christoph Eschenfelder** Louvain, 19 October 1518 150
880 **To [Matthias von Saarburg?]** Louvain, 19 October 1518 151
881 **To Johannes Longicampianus** Louvain, 20 October [1518] 152
882 **To Maternus Hatten** Louvain, 20 October 1518 153
883 **To Nikolaus Gerbel** Louvain, 20 October 1518 153
884 **To Hermannus Buschius** Louvain, 21 October [1518] 155
885 **To Johann Froben** Louvain, 22 October [1518] 156
886 **To Cuthbert Tunstall** Louvain, 22 October 1518 159
887 **To Richard Pace** Louvain, 22 October 1518 163

888 **To [William Blount, Lord Mountjoy]** Louvain, 23 October [1518] 164
889 **To [John Fisher]** Louvain, 23 October [1518] 165
890 **To Henry Bullock** [Louvain, c 23 October 1518] 166
891 **To John Colet** Louvain, 23 October 1518 167
892 **To Thomas Bedyll** Louvain, 23 October [1518] 168
893 **To [William Warham]** Louvain, 24 October 1518 169
894 **To Nicolas de Malaise** Louvain, 24 October 1518 173
895 **To John Smith** Louvain, 25 October [1518] 176
896 **From Guillaume Budé** Paris, 31 October [1518] 176
897 **To Maarten Lips** [Louvain, c October] 1518 180
898 **To Maarten Lips** [Louvain, c October 1518] 181
898A **To Maarten Lips** [Louvain, c November 1518?] 182
899 **To Maarten Lips** [Louvain, c November 1518] 183
900 **From Maarten Lips** Louvain, [c November 1518] 185
901 **To Maarten Lips** Louvain, [c November 1518] 186
902 **From Johannes Hovius to Maarten Lips** Louvain, [1518?] 187
902A **To Bruno Amerbach** Louvain, 4 November [1518?] 188
903 **To Henricus Glareanus** Louvain, [December?] 1518 189
904 **From Lambertus Hollonius** Basel, 5 December 1518 190
905 **To Paolo Bombace** Louvain, 13 December 1518 194
906 **To Guillaume Budé** Louvain, 22 December 1518 196
907 **From Thomas More** [London? 1518?] 215
908 **To Thomas More** [Louvain], 1 January [1519] 215
909 **To the Reader** Louvain, 1 January 1519 216
910 **From Philippus Melanchthon** Leipzig, 5 January 1519 220
911 **From Petrus Mosellanus** Leipzig, 6 January 1519 221
912 This letter now appears as 898A.
913 **To Jan de Hondt** Louvain, 22 January 1519 226
914 **From Chistophe de Longueil to Jacques Lucas** Rome, 29 January [1519?] 226
915 **From Guillaume Budé** Paris, 1 February [1519] 230
916 **To Erard de la Marck** Louvain, 5 February 1519 236
917 **To [Juan de la Parra]** Louvain, 13 February 1519 250
918 **To Erard de la Marck** Louvain, 19 February 1519 252
919 **To the Reader** [Louvain], 23 February 1519 253
920 **To Ludovicus Carinus** Louvain, 27 February 1519 257
921 **To Maarten Lips** [Louvain, c second half of February 1519] 258
922 **From Maarten Lips** Louvain, [c second half of February] 1519 258
923 **From Ulrich von Hutten** Mainz, 6 March [1519] 261
924 **From Guillaume Budé** Paris, 6 March [1519] 263
925 **From Nicolas Bérault** Paris, 16 March [1519] 267
926 **From Louis Ruzé** Liège, 16 March 1519 269
927 **To Juan Luis Vives** Mechelen, 17 March 1519 271
928 **To Louis Ruzé** Mechelen, [c 19–25] March 1519 272
929 **From Guillaume Budé** Paris, 19 March [1519] 275
930 **To Guillaume Budé** Mechelen, 21 March 1519 276
931 **To Wilhelm Nesen** Mechelen, 21 March 1519 277
932 **From Jan Becker of Borssele** Veere, 28 March 1519 278
933 **From Martin Luther** Wittenberg, 28 March 1519 281

934 **To Maarten Lips** Louvain, 30 March 1519 283
935 **To Christophe de Longueil** Louvain, 1 April 1519 286
936 **To John Fisher** Antwerp, 2 April 1519 288
937 **From Richard Pace** Richmond, 5 April [1519] 292
938 **From Wolfgang Faber Capito** [Basel], 8 April 1519 294
939 **To the Elector Frederick of Saxony** Antwerp, 14 April 1519 295
940 **To Jacobus Theodorici of Hoorn** Louvain, 17 April 1519 300
941 **To Euricius Cordus** Louvain, 17 April 1519 300
942 **To Johannes Draconites** Louvain, 18 April 1519 302
943 **To Johannes Thurzo** Louvain, 20 April 1519 303
944 **To Caspar Ursinus Velius** Louvain, [c 20 April 1519] 304
945 **To Guillaume de Croy** Louvain, 20 April 1519 305
946 **To [Jan Briart of Ath]** Louvain, [c 22 April 1519] 306
947 **To Philippus Melanchthon** Louvain, 22 April 1519 308
948 **To Petrus Mosellanus** Louvain, 22 April 1519 310
949 **From Lodovico Ricchieri** Milan, 22 April 1519 319
950 **To Jan Šlechta** Louvain, 23 April 1519 321
951 **To Ulrich von Hutten** Louvain, 23 April 1519 324
952 **To Jan Becker of Borssele** Louvain, 24 April 1519 326
953 **From Johannes Fabri** Constance, 26 April 1519 329
954 **To Guillaume Budé** [Louvain, April] 1519 332
955 **To Maarten Lips** [Louvain, c end of April 1519] 332
956 **To Antoine de la Marck** [Louvain, c end of April 1519] 333
957 **To Guillaume de Croy** Louvain, [c May 1519] 336
958 **From Guillaume de Croy** Louvain, [c May 1519] 340
959 **To Guillaume de Croy** Louvain, [c May 1519] 344
960 **To Maarten Lips** [Louvain, c March–May 1519] 349
961 **To Lorenzo Campeggi** Louvain, 1 May 1519 349
962 **To Richard Pace** Louvain, [first half of] May [1519] 353
963 **From Frederick of Saxony** Grimma, 14 May 1519 354
964 **To Henry VIII** Antwerp, 15 May 1519 356
965 **To William Blount, Lord Mountjoy** Antwerp, [15?] May 1519 362
966 **To Henry Guildford** Antwerp, 15 May 1519 363
967 **To Thomas Wolsey** Antwerp, 18 May [1519] 365
967A **To Justus Jonas** Antwerp, [c 20–6 May?] 1519 373
968 **To Albert of Brandenburg** Antwerp, 20 May 1519 377
969 **To Antoon, son of Jan van Bergen** Antwerp, 20 May 1519 378
970 **To Jacopo Bannisio** Brussels, 21 May 1519 379
971 **To Gilles de Busleyden** [Brussels? c 21 May] 1519 381
972 **From Leonardus Priccardus** Aachen, 23 May [1519] 382
973 **To Richard Foxe** Antwerp, 25 May 1519 383
974 **To Thomas Ruthall** Antwerp, 25 May 1519 384
975 **To Antoine Papin** Louvain, [end of May] 1519 385
976 **To Johannes Fabri** Louvain, [c end of May] 1519 386
977 **From Kaspar Schalbe** Brussels, 28 May 1519 388
978 **To Georgius Spalatinus** Louvain, 29 May 1519 389
979 **To the Elector Frederick of Saxony** Louvain, 30 May 1519 390
980 **To Martin Luther** Louvain, 30 May 1519 391

981 **To Kaspar Schalbe** Louvain, 30 May 1519 393
982 **To Helius Eobanus Hessus** Louvain, 30 May 1519 394
983 **To Johann Lang** Louvain, 30 May [1519] 395
984 **From Antoine Papin** Gembloux, 30 May [1519] 396
985 This letter now appears as 967A.
986 **From Ulrich von Hutten** Mainz, 5 June [1519] 397
987 **From Guillaume Budé** Paris, 10 June [1519] 401
988 **From Albert of Brandenburg** Frankfurt, 13 June 1519 403
989 **From Nicolas Bérault** Paris, 20 June [1519] 404
990 **To John Claymond** Louvain, 27 June 1519 405
991 **To Tranquillus Andronicus Parthenius** [Louvain], 28 June 1519 407
992 **From Guillaume Budé** Paris, 30 June [1519] 410

WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

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Allen	P.S. Allen, H.M. Allen, and H.W. Garrod eds *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami* (Oxford 1906–58) 11 vols and index
ASD	*Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami* (Amsterdam 1969–)
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BRE	A. Horawitz and K. Hartfelder eds *Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus* (Leipzig 1886; repr 1966)
Budé *Opera omnia*	Guillaume Budé *Opera omnia* (Basel 1557; repr 1966) 3 vols
CC	*Corpus Christianorum: series latina* (Turnhout 1953–)
CSEL	*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* (Vienna-Leipzig 1866–)
CWE	*Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto 1974–)
DBF	*Dictionnaire de biographie française* ed J. Balteau et al (Paris 1932–)
DBI	*Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* ed A.M. Ghisalberti et al (Rome 1960–)
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Melanchthon *Werke*	*Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl* ed Robert Stupperich et al (Gütersloh 1951–)
NDB	*Neue Deutsche Biographie* ed Historische Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin 1953–)
NK	W. Nijhoff and M.E. Kronenberg eds *Nederlandsche Bibliographie van 1500 tot 1540* (The Hague 1923–71)
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Phillips	Margaret Mann Phillips *The 'Adages' of Erasmus* (Cambridge 1964)

PL	J.P. Migne ed *Patrologiae cursus completus ... series latina* (Paris 1844–1902) 221 vols
RE	L. Geiger ed *Johann Reuchlins Briefwechsel* (Stuttgart 1875; repr 1962)
Reedijk	C. Reedijk ed *The Poems of Desiderius Erasmus* (Leiden 1956)
Rogers	Elizabeth Frances Rogers ed *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More* (Princeton 1947)
Scheurl's Briefbuch	*Christoph Scheurl's Briefbuch* ed F. von Soden and J.K.F. Knaake (Potsdam 1867–72; repr 1962) 2 vols
Scrinium	*Scrinium Erasmianum: Mélanges historiques publiés ... à l'occasion du cinquième centenaire de la naissance d'Erasme* ed J. Coppens (Leiden 1969) 2 vols
Ulmann *Maximilian I*	Heinrich Ulmann *Kaiser Maximilian I* (Stuttgart 1884–91; repr 1967) 2 vols
de Vocht CTL	Henry de Vocht *History of the Foundation and the Rise of the Collegium Trilingue Lovaniense 1517–1550* Humanistica lovaniensia 10–13 (Louvain 1951–5) 4 vols
de Vocht *Busleyden*	Henry de Vocht *Jérôme de Busleyden* Humanistica lovaniensia 9 (Turnhout 1950)
Volz *Die ersten Sammelausgaben*	Hans Volz 'Die ersten Sammelausgaben von Lutherschriften und ihre Drucker, 1518–20' *Gutenberg Jahrbuch 1960* (Mainz 1960) 185–204
Zwingli *Werke*	*Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke* ed E. Egli et al, Corpus Reformatorum vols 88–101 (Berlin-Zürich 1905–)

SHORT-TITLE FORMS FOR ERASMUS' WORKS

Titles following colons are longer versions of the same, or are alternative titles. Items entirely enclosed in square brackets are of doubtful authorship. For abbreviations, see Works Frequently Cited.

[Acta contra Lutherum: Acta academiae Lovaniensis contra Lutherum *Opuscula*]
Adagia: Adagiorum chiliades 1508 (Adagiorum collectanea for the primitive form, when required) LB II / ASD II-5, 6
Admonitio adversus mendacium: Admonitio adversus mendacium et obtrectationem LB X
Annotationes in Novum Testamentum LB VI
Antibarbari LB X / ASD I-1 / CWE 23
Apologia ad Fabrum: Apologia ad Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem LB IX
Apologia ad Caranzam: Apologia ad Sanctium Caranzam, or Apologia de tribus locis, or Responsio ad annotationem Stunicae LB IX
Apologia ad viginti et quattuor libros A. Pii LB IX
Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem: Apologia adversus debacchationes Petri Sutoris LB IX
Apologia adversus monachos: Apologia adversus monachos quosdam hispanos LB IX
Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii LB IX
Apologia contra Latomi dialogum: Apologia contra Iacobi Latomi dialogum de tribus linguis LB IX
Apologiae contra Stunicam: Apologiae contra Lopidem Stunicam LB IX
Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo' LB IX
Apologia de laude matrimonii: Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii LB IX
Apologia de loco 'omnes quidem': Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem resurgemus' LB IX
Apologia invectivis Lei: Apologia qua respondet duabus invectivis Eduardi Lei *Opuscula*
Apophthegmata LB IV
Appendix respondens ad Sutorem LB IX
Argumenta: Argumenta in omneis epistolas apostolicas nova (with Paraphrases)
Axiomata pro causa Lutheri: Axiomata pro causa Martini Lutheri *Opuscula*

Carmina varia LB VIII
Catalogus lucubrationum LB I
Christiani hominis institutum, carmen LB V
Ciceronianus: Dialogus Ciceronianus LB I / ASD I-2
Colloquia LB I / ASD I-3
Compendium vitae Allen I / CWE 4
[Consilium: Consilium cuiusdam ex animo cupientis esse consultum *Opuscula*]

De bello turcico: Consultatio de bello turcico LB V
De civilitate: De civilitate morum puerilium LB I
De concordia: De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia LB V

De conscribendis epistolis LB I / ASD I-2
De constructione: De constructione octo partium orationis, or Syntaxis LB I / ASD I-4
De contemptu mundi: Epistola de contemptu mundi LB V / ASD V-1
De copia: De duplici copia verborum ac rerum LB I / CWE 24
De immensa Dei misericordia: Concio de immensa Dei misericordia LB V
De libero arbitrio: De libero arbitrio diatribe LB IX
De praeparatione: De praeparatione ad mortem LB V / ASD V-1
De pueris instituendis: De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis LB I / ASD I-2
De puero Iesu: Concio de puero Iesu LB V
De ratione studii LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 24
De recta pronuntiatione: De recta latini graecique sermonis pronuntiatione LB I / ASD I-4
De tedio Iesu: Disputatiuncula de tedio, pavore, tristicia Iesu LB V
De virtute amplectenda: Oratio de virtute amplectenda LB V
Declamatio de morte LB IV
Declamatiuncula LB IV
Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae LB IX
Detectio praestigiarum: Detectio praestigiarum cuiusdam libelli germanice scripti LB X
[Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium: Chonradi Nastadiensis dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium *Opuscula*]
Dilutio: Dilutio eorum quae Iodocus Clithoveus scripsit adversus declamationem suasoriam matrimonii
Divinationes ad notata Bedae LB IX

Ecclesiastes: Ecclesiastes sive de ratione concionandi LB V
Elenchus in N. Bedae censuras LB IX
Enchiridion: Enchiridion militis christiani LB V
Encomium matrimonii (in De conscribendis epistolis)
Encomium medicinae: Declamatio in laudem artis medicae LB I / ASD I-4
Epigrammata LB I
Epistola ad Dorpium LB IX / CWE 3
Epistola ad fratres Inferioris Germaniae: Responsio ad fratres Germaniae Inferioris ad epistolam apologeticam incerto autore proditam LB X
Epistola ad graculos: Epistola ad quosdam imprudentissimos graculos LB X
Epistola apologetica de Termino LB X
Epistola consolatoria: Epistola consolatoria virginibus sacris LB V
Epistola contra pseudevangelicos: Epistola contra quosdam qui se falso iactant evangelicos LB X
Epistola de esu carnium: Epistola apologetica ad Christophorum episcopum Basiliensem de interdicto esu carnium LB IX
Exomologesis: Exomologesis sive modus confitendi LB V
Explanatio symboli: Explanatio symboli apostolorum sive catechismus LB V / ASD V-1
Expostulatio Iesu LB V

Formula: Conficiendarum epistolarum formula (see De conscribendis epistolis)

Hymni varii LB V
Hyperaspistes LB X

Institutio christiani matrimonii LB V
Institutio principis christiani LB IV / ASD IV-1

[Julius exclusus: Dialogus Julius exclusus e coelis *Opuscula*]

Lingua LB IV / ASD IV-1
Liturgia Virginis Matris: Virginis Matris apud Lauretum cultae liturgia LB V / ASD V-1

Methodus: Ratio verae theologiae LB V
Modus orandi Deum LB V / ASD V-1
Moria: Moriae encomium, or Moria LB IV / ASD IV-3

Novum Testamentum: Novum Testamentum 1519 and later (Novum instrumentum for the first edition, 1516, when required) LB VI

Obsecratio ad Virginem Mariam: Obsecratio sive oratio ad Virginem Mariam in rebus adversis LB V
Oratio de pace: Oratio de pace et discordia LB VIII
Oratio funebris: Oratio funebris Berthae de Heyen LB VIII

Paean Virgini Matri: Paean Virgini Matri dicendus LB V
Panegyricus: Panegyricus ad Philippum Austriae ducem LB IV / ASD IV-1
Parabolae: Parabolae sive similia LB I / ASD I-5 / CWE 23
Paraclesis LB V, VI
Paraphrasis in Elegantias Vallae: Paraphrasis in Elegantias Laurentii Vallae LB I / ASD I-4
Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum LB VII
Paraphrasis in Matthaeum: Paraphrasis in Matthaeum, etc LB VII
Peregrinatio apostolorum: Peregrinatio apostolorum Petri et Pauli LB VI, VII
Precatio ad Virginis filium Iesum (in Precatio pro pace)
Precatio dominica LB V
Precationes LB V
Precatio pro pace ecclesiae: Precatio ad Iesum pro pace ecclesiae LB IV, V
Progymnasmata: Progymnasmata quaedam primae adolescentiae Erasmi LB VIII
Psalmi: Psalmi, or Enarrationes sive commentarii in psalmos LB V
Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri: Purgatio adversus epistolam non sobriam Lutheri LB IX

Querela pacis LB IV / ASD IV-2

Ratio verae theologiae: Methodus LB V
Responsio ad annotationes Lei: Liber quo respondet annotationibus Lei LB IX
Responsio ad collationes: Responsio ad collationes cuiusdam iuvenis gerontodidascali LB IX

Responsio ad disputationem de divortio: Responsio ad disputationem cuiusdam Phimostomi de divortio LB IX
Responsio ad epistolam Pii: Responsio ad epistolam paraeneticam Alberti Pii, or Responsio ad exhortationem Pii LB IX
Responsio ad notulas Bedaicas LB X
Responsio ad Petri Cursii defensionem: Epistola de apologia Cursii LB X
Responsio adversus febricantis libellum: Apologia monasticae religionis LB X

Spongia: Spongia adversus aspergines Hutteni LB X
Supputatio: Supputatio calumniarum Natalis Bedae LB IX

Vidua christiana LB V
Virginis et martyris comparatio LB V
Vita Hieronymi: Vita diui Hieronymi Stridonensis *Opuscula*

Index

Aachen: Erasmus in 118–19, 167, 171; cathedral, drawing by Dürer *170 illustration*; canons of 191, 383; friars in 382

Abraham 78

Actuarius, *De urinis* 61

Adrian of Utrecht, cardinal (later Pope Adrian VI), attitude to studies 379

Adrianus, Matthaeus: parsimony of 52; physician for Erasmus 125; success in Louvain 148; quarrel with Capito 148–9; defends Collegium Trilingue 285n

Aeschylus, *Philoctetes* 273n

Aesop 349n

Africa: barbarous region 33; superstitious rites in 244, 245

Agricola, Rodolphus, his kinsman Haio Herman 190

Alaard of Amsterdam, at Collegium Trilingue 283

Albert of Brandenburg. *See* Brandenburg

Alcibiades 10

Alcionio, Pietro, translations of 59, 128

Aldington, Erasmus' annuity at 169

Aleandro, Girolamo 126, 222

Alexander, condemned by St Paul 239

Alexander the Great 29; Curtius' *History* of 36, 161; Henry VIII likened to 361; Wolsey compared to 366

Alexandria, library at 253

Ambrose, St: version of Pauline Epistles 5; Vulgate not his 5, 97; inspired by Holy Spirit 12; used Greek texts 16; notes lapses in Peter 28; repute among scholars 32; Erasmus' guide 97, 250; more learned than Augustine 182; (Pseudo-Ambrose) on abstention 241–2; *De viduis* 243

Amerbach, Basilius: Erasmus greets 189; greets Erasmus 193; no help in proofreading 194; flees plague 194n

Amerbach, Bonifacius: autograph copy of Zasius' letter *70 illustration;* Zasius pleads for 72; Erasmus praises 95; Erasmus greets 189; and Zasius 191; seeks manuscript of Melanchthon's hymn 309n

– letter to 99

Amerbach, Bruno: marriage of 155; Greek studies 158; proofreads *Novum Testamentum* 194

– letter to 188

Amerbach brothers: invited by Pucci 62; Zasius greets 72; Bombace greets 110; proofreading skills 160

Ammonio, Andrea: death of 65; letter from (lost) 96

Andrelini, Fausto, poet royal in Paris: death of 37, 65; *Julius exclusus* attributed to 351

Andronicus Parthenius, Tranquillus (Fran Trankvil Andreis), of Trogir: at Leipzig 223; two poems of 408

– letter to 407

Angleberme, Jean Pyrrhus d', professor in Orléans 111; *Militia Francorum regum* 111n
Angst, Wolfgang 152; corrector for Schöffer 256; preface for edition of Livy 324
Antioch, and St Luke 30
Antoninus Pius, emperor, Henry VIII likened to 361
Antwerp: Erasmus' repute in 38; book stolen in 149; Erasmus in 285, 326, 327, 408; criticism of Erasmus 307; Maximilian I in 314; Proost in 393; Augustinian convent 393
Apelles 287
Apostolics, errors of 246
Aquinas. *See* Thomas Aquinas
Ardennes, abbey of St Hubert 174n
Argyropoulos, Johannes: translation of 101; edition of Aristotle *Ethics* 343n
Arians 17. *See also* Arius
Aristarchus, prince of critics 183
Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 244n
Aristotle: ignored by apostles 13; and Thomas Aquinas 23; Eck cites 32; Augustine and 34; theory of memory 58; Linacre's translations 101, 129; Alcionio's versions 128; cited in Italy 246; theologian disciples 388. *See also* Peripatetics
– works: *De generatione animalium* 61n; *Elenchi* 34; *Metaphysica* 34; *Meteorologica* 129; *Nicomachean Ethics* 336n, 343n, 384; *Physica* 34; *Posteriora* 34; *Priora* 34; *Topica* 34
Arius 246. *See also* Arians
Asia Minor: Greek spoken 29; St Paul's conquest of 243
Ateca, Jorge de, confessor to Catherine of Aragon 317–18
Atensis. *See* Briart
Athanasius, St, *Commentary on St Paul* (spurious) 38
Athens, Areopagus of 233
Augsburg: Oecolampadius takes post in 193
– Diet of (1518): Vitellius' speech 103n, 105; Cajetanus' speech 167; Erasmus reports on 171–2; la Marck at 236n
Augustine, St: on Bible texts and versions 5, 5–6, 18, 97; standard of ancients 8; inspired writer 8; on style 9, 10, 11–12; disparages philosophy 13; and Greek heretics 16; and Innocent I 18; mistakes in 23, 26, 28; and 'folly' of Christ 24, 25; theologians and 26; notes lapses in Peter 28; Jerome preferred to 31–5; repute among scholars 32; Erasmus consults 33, 97; deficiencies in 34; and Cicero 34; Origen surpasses 35; on dialectic 84; and religious garb 86; 'Rule' of 88, 183, 184; on eloquence 103; Greeks superior to 181; and Jerome 205–6, 335; and sinners 240–1; Lips urges edition of 259; canons not worthy of his name 260; doctrine of justification 298; and Donatists 299; rejects lust 376
– works: *Ad fratres in eremo* (spurious) 187; Commentary on John 182; *Confessions* 34; *De bono coniugii* 242; *De civitate Dei* 6n, 35, 82; *De doctrina christiana* 9, 12, 18, 34, 84, 103n; *De haeresibus* 16, 17, 187, 246; *De locutionibus* 14; *De ordine* 9; *De trinitate* 34; *Enarratio in Psalmum* 24; letters 80, to Aurelius 187, to Januarius 244, to Macedonius 240, to Publicola 242; *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* 6n
Augustinian canons; canons regular, unworthy members 260, 376. *See also* Lips
Augustinian friars (Eremites): support Karlstadt at Leipzig 225; Wolsey's reformation of 366; unworthy member 376. *See also* Luther; Lang; Staupitz
Augustus, Octavius, emperor: and Virgil 265; his tragedy *Ajax* 270n; Henry VIII likened to 361
Ausonius, Decimus Magnus 199
Austria: Ferdinand ruler of 251n;

and Swabian League 263n. *See also* Vienna
Averroes, Leoni's attack on 61, 127
Avicenna, Desparts' commentary on 74

Bade, Josse, of Assche, printer in Paris: visit to Gillis 42; prints Emilio's histories 43; prints Budé's letters 43n
Baechem, Nicolaas (Egmondus), of Egmond: likened to Hoogstraten 150; hostility to Erasmus 307n, 315
Baer (Ber), Ludwig, of Basel: Dorp praises 50; Erasmus greets 149
Baerland, Adriaan Ælius van 379
Baerland, Adriaan Cornelissen van: regent at Louvain 52, 156; Hollonius' letter to 191
Baier, Melchior, stone relief of Sigismund I 104 *illustration*
Balbi, Girolamo 351n
Bannisio, Jacopo, imperial agent in Flanders
– letter to 379
Barbier, Pierre, chaplain to Jean Le Sauvage, bishop of Paria 226
– letter to 39
Barnabas, contended with St Paul 65
Bartolini, Riccardo, canon of Perugia: and Ursinus' poem 48, 305; at Diet of Augsburg 105
Bartolo of Sassoferrato 398
Basel: Erasmus arrives in 4n, 39; Cantiuncula at 52; Pucci in 62, 95n, 216; Myconius in 98n; Erasmus' work in 108, 386; Erasmus departs from 113; Erasmus ill in 119, 120, 125, 131, 133, 164, 165, 171; plague in 159, 191, 194n; Hollonius in 190n; Carinus in 257
Basil the Great, St: used Greek Scriptures 16; monastic rule of 88; Erasmus consults 97; commentary on Isaiah 291
Bathodius. *See* Hackfurt
Bavaria, and Swabian League 263n. *See also* Ingolstadt
Bavaria, Ernest of, duke 36
Bavaria, William of, duke 399n
Beaulieu-en-Argonne, abbey 333n
Becker, Jan, of Borssele, dean of Veere 42, 52
– letter from 278
– letter to 326
Bedburg: Erasmus at 165; Hollonius at 191
Bedyll, Thomas, secretary of Warham
– letter to 168
Beghards 25
Belgium: Lang in 47; Maximilian I in 47; Ruzé's mission to 270
Bembo, Pietro, of Venice, papal secretary 222
Benedict, St 88
Benedictines: some prefer rule to Gospel 86, 88; unworthy members 376. *See also* Bersuire; Bollart; Papin; Volz
Benigno Salviati, Giorgio (Juraj Dragišić), *Reuchlin Defended* 45
Ber. *See* Baer
Bérault, Nicolas: Erasmus greets 190; two letters from (lost) 267; Erasmus praises 274; and Poncher 275
– letter from 404
– letter to 267
Bergen, Antoon van, son of Jan van Bergen 330n
– letter to 378
Bergen, Jan van 378–9
Bergen, Maximiliaan van, herr van Zevenbergen, meets Fabri in Constance 330
Beroaldo, Filippo, the Younger, edition of Tacitus 255n
Berquin, Louis de, Bérault commends 268
Berselius, Paschasius: greets Erasmus 125; and Malaise 175; Ruzé praises 270; carried Ruzé's lettter 273; praises Antoine de la Marck 333
Bersuire, Pierre, *Ovidius moralizatus* 24n
Beyming, Heinrich, of Butzbach
– letter to 141

Bible; Holy Scriptures: versions of defended 5–26, 367–8; and three languages 8; inspiration and language of 8; style of 9; and philosophy 13; Malaise and 174; necessity of 239; simplicity of 244; as heavenly mysteries 269; Erasmus perverts 311; Erasmus' knowledge of 331
- Old Testament: Maccabees 2–3; Jerome's translations 5, 21; Jonah 6; Septuagint as forgery 15; Leviticus 15; Esdras 21; Tobit 21; 2 Kings 22; Micah 28; Isaiah 248, 357, 383; Job 357; Proverbs 357
- New Testament: Vulgate not Jerome's 5, 14; Ambrose's version of Paul 5; Apocalypse 11; simple style of 12; Erasmus works to restore 15, 19, 97–8, 383; Luke 16, 162–3, 238; Matthew 17, 29; 1 Corinthians 24; Timothy 29; Acts, language in 29, 241; Apostolic Epistles 29, 173–5; Theophylact's commentary on Paul 38; spirit of Gospels 77–9, 86–9, 325; Paul, Epistles of 78, 86, 325, 353; John 162; Romans 167, 268; majesty of Gospels 175; Augustine and Chrysostom's commentaries on John 182; James 241; Peter 241, 314; Galatians 314; Philemon 375. *See also* Erasmus, original works: *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum; Novum instrumentum; Novum Testamentum; Paraphrases* (general); *Paraphrasis in Corinthios; Paraphrasis in Galatas; Paraphrasis in Romanos*

Biel, Gabriel 33, 75

Birckmann, Arnold, brother of Franz Birckmann 158, 169, 176

Birckmann, Franz, of Cologne, bookseller in Antwerp: carries news from Paris 37; in England 42; in Paris 45; procures books for Erasmus 157; and Erasmus' finances 159, 169

Blount, William, Lord Mountjoy, head of Catherine's household 63; fails to pay Erasmus 216; one of Erasmus' 'Williams' 340, 344, 348; negotiates peace 358n
- letters to 164, 362

Bodenstein. *See* Karlstadt

Boerio, Bernardo 110, 195

Boerio, Giovanni 110, 195

Boerio, Giovanni Battista 110n

Boethius: *Consolation of Philosophy* 11; *Institutio musica* 214n

Bohemia: studies progress in 165, 174; schism in 323. *See also* Prague

Boissard, R. engraving of Justus Jonas *144 illustration*

Bollart, Willem, abbot of St Truiden 385

Bologna: Pins and Erasmus in 274n; Campeggi in 349n

Bombace, Paolo, of Bologna: and approval for *Novum Testamentum* 96, 106n, 109; letter to (lost), sent to More 215
- letter from 108
- letters to 61, 194

Bonaventure, St 75

Bonn 117

Bonomo, Pietro, bishop of Trieste, at Diet of Augsburg 105

Boppard: Erasmus at 115; Eschenfelder at 150, 165

Borssele, Anna van, vrouwe van Veere, death of 280

Borssele, Jan Becker van. *See* Becker

Brabant: Erasmus will return to 41, 171; Erasmus in 323; Schalbe seeks Erasmus in 388. *See also* Brussels; Louvain; Mechelen

Brandenburg, Albert of, cardinal, archbishop of Mainz 105, 168, 173; patron of studies 133–4, 324; rumour of death 193; Erasmus praises 256; eager to see Erasmus 261; and Hutten 261, 398; *Ratio verae theologiae* dedicated to 387, 397, 403–4
- letter from 403
- letter to 377

Breisach, Erasmus dines at 113

Bremen: Cordus at 300n; Proost in 393n
Briart (Briaert), Jan, of Ath, dean of theology at Louvain 52, 259; visits Erasmus 125, 149; critic of Erasmus 349, 409
– letter to 306
Brie, Germain de, Erasmus praises 274
Britain. *See* England
Britons, ancient 62
Brosamer, Hans, woodcut of Ulrich of Württemberg *262 illustration*
Bruges, Cavillotus in 158
Brussels: Longicampianus in 152n; Jonas and Schalbe in 355n; Pace and Erasmus in 356n, 377n, 381
Bry, Théodore de, engraving of Zasius *68 illustration*
Bucer, Martin 295n
Budé, Guillaume: Gillis forwards letters of 37, 42; prepares edition of letters 43; legal studies 101, 129; Erasmus rejects assistance of 107n; letters from mentioned 111, 161, 404; Mosellanus praises 222; biography of, by Le Roy 227n; Erasmus preferred to 227; house on rue Saint-Martin 231; awaits *Novum Testamentum* 268; and Ruzé 271, 273; Erasmus praises 273, 275; angry with Erasmus 274, 277–8; Longueil's defence of 228–30, 286–8; mission for Francis I 332; one of Erasmus' 'Williams' 340, 344, 348; absent from Paris 405; his wife with child 405
– letters from 176, 230, 263, 275, 401, 410
– letters to 130, 196, 276, 332
Bullock, Henry, of Cambridge
– letter to 166
Burgundian Netherlands; Low Countries: studies languish in 161, 174, 273; Luther's book in 193n; Prince Ferdinand in 250n. *See also* (provinces): Brabant; Holland; Zeeland; (cities): Aachen; Antwerp; Bruges; Courtrai; Deventer; Douai; Liège; St Truiden; Tongeren; Utrecht
Burgundy, Aldolph of, heer van Veere, admiral 38, 280, 326, 327, 329
Burgundy, Philip of, bishop of Utrecht 38n, 326
Buschius, Hermannus: Eichholz and 112; Erasmus meets 114; tale about Hoogstraten 148
– letter to 155
Busleyden, Gilles de 156n
– letter to 381
Busleyden, Jérôme de, archbishop of Besançon, established Collegium Trilingue 156
Butzbach, Beyming's school at 141n

Cabbala 368
Cadiz 46, 304
Caesar, Gaius Julius: knowledge of astrology 339; Henry VIII likened to 361
Caesarius, Johannes, of Jülich, teacher in Cologne 112, 371
Cajetanus (Tommaso de Vio), cardinal of San Sisto: opposes Luther 147n, 168n, 296–7; speech at Augsburg 167, 173; Hutten attacks 261, 263n
Calvo, Francesco Giulio (Minutio), bookseller from Pavia: letter from Rhenanus (mentioned) 99n; carries letters for Erasmus 267, 404; and Ricchieri 319
Cambridge: Lefèvre's partisans in 166; good studies at 316; Fisher's rule in 363
Caminadus (Vincent), Augustinus Vincentius, and manuscript of *Colloquia* 217n, 218
Campeggi, Lorenzo, papal legate in England: diplomatic defeat 358n; patron of studies 378, 379, 380, 405
– letter to 349
Canons regular. *See* Augustinian canons
Cantiuncula (Chansonnette), Claudius, of Metz 52
Capito, Wolfgang Faber: Dorp praises

50; *Hebraicarum institutionum libri duo* 50; portrait engraving of *146 illustration*; letter to Luther about Erasmus (lost) 282; partisan of Luther 369n
- letter from 294
- letter to 147

Caracciolo, Marino, of Naples, protonotary, nuncio to the Empire, delivers papal brief to Erasmus 110, 194
Carbach, Nikolaus (Nikolaus Fabri), of Karbach 152n; edition of Livy 253n, 256
Caria, sepulchre of Mausolus 406
Carinus (Kiel), Ludovicus, of Lucerne
- letter to 257

Carmelites, unworthy members 396. *See also* Baechem; Craeys; Robyns, Jan
Castere, Jacob van, of Hazebrouck 280
Catherine of Aragon, queen of England: Erasmus praises 63, 359, 388; portrait of, by Sittow *64 illustration*; deceived into criticizing Erasmus 317–18
Cato, Marcus Porcius 'the censor' 56
Cato the Younger (Uticensis) 339
'Cavillotus alias Dissutus,' A Franciscan of Bruges 158
Cellarius, Johannes, of Burgkundstadt, letter from (mentioned) 147
Ceratinus (Jacob Teyng) of Hoorn, meets Budé 411, 412
Champagne, imperial campaigns in 333n
Chansonnette. *See* Cantiuncula
Charles of Hapsburg, prince of Burgundy, king of Spain, from 1519 the Emperor Charles v: Le Sauvage serves 55, 56; returns from Spain 173; patron of Erasmus 179, 212, 280; and la Marck family 237, 333n; ambitious for imperial crown 251n, 330; absence hinders studies 317, 379; devotion to peace 357
Chièvres. *See* Croy
Chimay, Croy funeral monument at *334 illustration*
Christ. *See* Jesus Christ
Chromatius, and St Jerome 21
Chrysippus, and logic 12
Chrysostom. *See* John Chrysostom
Cicero: style of 9, 11, 59; Augustine denigrates 35; and Trebatius 199; fertile age of 252; conquered poor health 337; on 'goods' 342, 347
- works: *De inventione* 103n; *De natura deorum* 375n; *Epistula ad Atticum* 268n; *Epistulae ad familiares* 354n; *Pro Fonteio* 410n

Claymond, John, of Frampton
- letter to 405

Clement, John, lectures at Oxford 215, 367
Cleopas, reputed second husband of St Anne 137
Clichtove, Josse, of Nieuwpoort, *Disceptationis de Magdalena defensio* 289n
Clouet, Jean, miniature portrait of Artus Gouffier *266 illustration*
Cnidus, statue of Venus at 406
Coelius. *See* Ricchieri
Colet, John: Erasmus' disputation with 24; as preacher 63; consulted for *Novum Testamentum* 106n; has copy of Cajetanus' speech 173n; protested Henry VIII's war 358n; and Henry Guildford 364; on Privy Council 387
- letter to 167

Colmar 4n
Cologne: Marcaeus at 2n; Benedictine convent 2n, 3; relics in 3; Erasmus praises 3; Erasmus in 3n, 37, 117, 131, 164, 165; and Reuchlin affair 51, 53, 322; Eichholz at 112; Fat Hen bookshop 112; Coney house 112; White Horse inn 112; Haymarket 112; plague in 117, 173, 195; Buschius in 155n; Hoogstraten not welcome in 166; and *Julius exclusus* 215; and Luther 294n;

defenders of bad literature in 311; Erasmus' repute in 322
Conon (Cono), Johannes, of Nürnberg, Greek tutor of Amerbachs 158
Constance: Council of 15; quarrel with Pace 163; Pace and Fabri in 330, 331
Cop, Guillaume: as translator 101; literary works 129; and invitation to Erasmus 212; Erasmus praises 274
Cordus, Euricius (Heinrich Ritze Solden), of Simtshausen
- letter to 300
Corinthians, St Paul and 239–40, 249
Corpus iuris canonici (*Decreta*) 7–8, 13, 243
Courtrai (Kortrijk), Hondt at 226
Cracow: Thurzo in 45n; Sigismund chapel in 104
Craeys, Sebastiaan, of Antwerp 314, 315
Cranach, Lucas, design for portrait of Frederick of Saxony 139n
Croy, Catherine de, wife of Robert de la Marck 335
Croy, Charles de, prince of Chimay 335; funeral monument *334 illustration*
Croy, Guillaume de, prince of Chièvres 265n, 337, 343, 379
Croy, Guillaume de, cardinal: student of Vives 252, 272, 305n; patron of studies 324
- letter from 340
- letters to 305, 336, 344
Curtius Rufus, Quintus, *History of Alexander the Great* 36
Cynics 57
Cyprian, St: and Scripture texts 5, 16; style of 9; Erasmus dissents from 23; Erasmus consults 97; Vulgate not his 97; more learned than Augustine 182
Cyril, St 97

Damasus I, pope: and St Jerome 5n, 17, 21; as poet 13
Delft, Gillis van: at Louvain 259, 306n; *Conclusiones in sententias* 259n
Deloynes, François, of Paris: partisan of Budé 131; Erasmus greets 214; Erasmus fails to write 235; awaits *Novum Testamentum* 268; Erasmus praises 273; letters from (mentioned) 404; sends greetings 405
Democritus of Abdera 225
Demosthenes: translations by Alcionio 59; overcame speech impediment 337
Desiderius, and St Jerome 21
Desparts, Jacques, of Tournai, commentary on Avicenna 74
Deventer: Erasmus in 300; bridge across the Ijssel 300
Diogenes Laertius, and Plato 203–4
Diogenes of Sinope 57n
Dionysius the Areopagite. *See* Pseudo-Dionysius
Dominicans; Friars Preacher: unnamed friar 'Christianized' Ovid 23–4; Hoogstraten no credit to 43; resent preface to *Enchiridion* 72n; promote Thomas Aquinas 75; servitude to absolute popes 139; support Eck at Leipzig 225; unnamed critics of Erasmus 314, 315; spread rumours of Erasmus' death 322; unworthy members 396. *See also* Ateca; Bucer; Cajetanus; Durand de Saint-Pourçain; Hoogstraten; Jacobus; Löblein; Prierias; Thomas Aquinas; Wallensis
Donatists 299
Donatus, Aelius: grammar rules 7; life of Virgil 265n
Dorp, Maarten van: letter to cited 12, 21; letter to (lost) 49; visits Erasmus 125, 149; letter from Longicampianus 152; Lips and 259
- letter from 49
Douai, More's papers in 37n
Draconites (Draco), Johannes, of Karlstadt, woodcut portrait of *135 illustration*

– letters to 133, 302
Duns Scotus, John; Scotists: 19, 73n, 327; Scotists as sophists 268; Scotists ignore Christ 375
Duprat, Antoine, chancellor of France 280
Durand de Saint-Pourçain 33, 75
Dürer, Albrecht: chalk drawing of Ulrich Varnbüler *116 illustration*; woodcut portrait of Eobanus *140 illustration*; drawing of Aachen cathedral *170 illustration*
Du Ruel, Jean, of Soissons 268

Ebionites 84, 246
Eck, Johann Maier von: objections to *Novum instrumentum* 107n; 'Obeliscs' against Luther 139; treated Melanchthon falsely 220, 221; and Leipzig disputation 223, 225, 310n
– letter to 27
Edmondanus, Egmondanus. *See* Baechem
Egnazio (Cipelli), Giambattista, of Venice: Erasmus recalls 126; Erasmus greets 130
Egranus (Wildenauer), Johannes, of Cheb, *Apologetica responsio* 137
Egypt: Greek spoken in 29; conquered by Turks 58
Eichholz, Adolf
– letter from 111
Elbe river 323
Emilio, Paolo: *De rebus gestis Francorum* 43; brings glory to France 274
England; Britain; English people: and Vulgate 7; Birckmann in 42; Pace summoned to 62; Erasmus will retire to 118, 159n, 161, 171, 293–4; studies flourish in 128, 174, 273, 369, 377, 379, 380; admiration for Erasmus in 141; visit to postponed 160; unhealthy climate 184; and Luther 193, 392; relations with France 212; Erasmus' patrons in 212, 365–6, 367; reform of clergy in 291; past visits to 300; Erasmus rumoured in 329, 399; hopes for preferment in 350n, 356n; Erasmus praises 359, 362; Antoon van Bergen to visit 378n. *See also* Aldington; Cambridge; London; Oxford
Eobanus Hessus (Eoban Koch), Helius, of Halgehausen: flees plague at Cologne 117n; visits Erasmus 131n, 132, 133, 134, 155, 302; compared to Ovid 133, 142, 155, 301; woodcut portrait of *140 illustration*; carries Longicampianus' letter 152; Erasmus greets 301; connection with Melanchthon 308n; promising scholar 369
– works: *Bucolicon* 133n; *Heroidum christianarum epistolae* 133, 142; *Hodoeporicon* 131n, 134n, 355n, 395; poem in praise of Henry III of Nassau 395
– letters to 141, 394
Epictetus of Hierapolis 342, 346
Epicureans 341
Episcopius, Nicolaus, printer in Basel 95n
Erasmus, original works:
– *Adagia*: use of 'The Suda' 3n; allusions from 6, 10, 11, 18, 24, 27, 30, 32, 33, 34, 43, 48, 53, 55, 57, 58, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 77, 86, 94, 108, 126, 130, 163, 177, 183, 186, 188, 189, 202, 209, 210, 211, 212, 215, 218, 225, 229, 230, 234, 237, 239, 245, 249, 265, 270, 273, 274, 281, 286, 297, 302, 303, 305, 306, 315, 316, 318, 320, 330, 339, 340, 341, 344, 347, 348, 350, 354, 359, 364, 366, 370, 380, 384, 385, 408; Leoni immortalized in 130; many editions of 232; and Ricchieri 320
– *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (notes for *Novum instrumentum*): used Theophylact 38n; revision of 107n; impressed Albert of Brandenburg 261; critics of 314
– *Antibarbari*: manuscript for lost 163, 218
– *Apologia ad Fabrum*: Giustiniani in

148, 161; reprinted 161–2; Budé's criticism of 200–3, 204–11, 213–14, 235–6
- *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* 285n; copy for Croy 306; hastily composed 306, 312, 326, 398
- *Apologia de laude matrimonii*: answers Briart 236n, 307n; censorship of rumoured 349n
- *Argumenta*: title page 172 *illustration*; preface to 173–5; copy to Lips 187; Becker and 278
- *Ciceronianus*, Longueil in 227n
- *Colloquia*: first edition ill-advised 191n; preface to revised edition 216
- *De conscribendis epistolis* 218
- *De copia*: Budé's critique of 207; composition of 218
- *De tedio Iesu* 24
- *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium* 285n, 311n
- *Ecclesiastes* 279n
- *Enchiridion*: Lee criticizes 25; preface to 2nd ed 72–91; announcement of 145, 161, 291; copy to Lips 182; Becker recalls 279; Luther reads 282
- *Encomium matrimoni*, Briart attacks 306n
- *Institutio principis christiani*: preface to new edition 54–6; Erasmus announces 161; and Prince Ferdinand 250n, 304, 380; Becker recalls 279
- *Julius exclusus*: popular in Antwerp 43; Dorp reports on 51; widespread popularity 147–8; Erasmus speculates on origin of 198, 215–16, 351; controversy over 277n; Erasmus denies authorship 371–2
- letters: *Auctarium* 161, 181, 213; *Epistolae elegantes* (1517), Longueil's reaction to 227n
- *Lucubrationum Erasmi Roterodami index* 132
- *Moriae encomium*: Lee critical of 23–6; in England 317; Erasmus defends 372
- *Novum instrumentum* (1516): Lee's criticism of 4–26, 162, 382; Erasmus defends 28–36; Erasmus dissatisfied with 106, 106n–107n; criticisms of 145, 315
- *Novum Testamentum* (1519): Erasmus' preparation of 38, 39, 41, 69, 113n, 117, 125, 132, 160, 166, 167, 212; Tunstall's vellum copy 40 *illustration*, 41, 160; approval by Leo x 106–8, 323; proofreading for 153, 189, 194; Laurinus' copy 183; at the press 191; contains lives of evangelists 194; eagerly awaited 259–60, 268, 285, 331; Melanchthon's opinion wanted 308; has appeared 323, 381; copy for Lips 332; copy for Campeggi 350, 352; copy for Wolsey 372; controversy over at Louvain 380; reception in Aachen 382
- *Paraphrases* (general) 160, 166, 167, 175; and Melanchthon 308
- *Paraphrasis in Corinthios*: preface to 236–50; copy for la Marck 252–3; copy for Lips 258–9; Pace praises 293, 353; Erasmus announces 326, 381; dedication to la Marck 335
- *Paraphrasis in Galatas*: Erasmus announces 326, 381; preface to 333; copy for Ruthall 384–5
- *Paraphrasis in Romanos*, Melanchthon's opinion of 221
- *Ratio verae theologiae*: new edition 173n; copy for Lips 187; dedication to Albert of Brandenburg 261, 397, 403; Becker praises 278; Mosellanus uses 283n; Latomus opposes 290; Rhenanus' dedication of to Fabri 331, two dedications of 377, 387, 403–4

Erasmus, editions and translations
- Basil, St, *Basilii in Esaiam commentariolus* 291
- Cyprian, St, Erasmus seeks manuscripts for 385–6, 396
- Curtius Rufus, Quintus, *History of Alexander the Great* 36, 161
- Jerome, St, *Hieoronymi opera*: copy

for Warham 169; mistake in letters of 189; Lips praises 259; Erasmus dared to correct 318; Priccardus praises 382
- Josephus, Flavius, *On the Sovereign Rule of Reason* 2n; preface 2–3
- Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*: dedication to Frederick of Saxony 139, 295, 309, 355, 390; a majestic work 161
- Valla, Lorenzo, *Elegantiae* 218

Erfurt, St Maria's school 301
- university: Eobanus at 131n, 132, 147, 141n, 142n; Lang at 134n; Beyming at 141n; Textoris at 141n; Werter at 143n; Jonas at 145n; Thodorici at 300n; Cordus at 300n; renown of 301; approves Erasmus' work 302; Schalbe at 388

Ernest of Bavaria. *See* Bavaria

Eschenfelder, Christoph, hosts Erasmus 115
- letter to 150

Essenes 87, 246

Euchites, errors of 246

Euripides 354

Euripus, strait 30

Fabri, Johannes (Heigerlin), vicar-general of Constance, tomb sculpture of *328 illustration*
- letter from 329
- letter to 386

Fathers of the Church: authority of 11; Erasmus' use of 15, 20; novelties of 23; lost commentaries of 250. *See also* Ambrose; Athanasius; Augustine; Basil; Cyprian; Cyril; Gregory of Nazianzus; Hilary; Jerome; John Chrysostom; Origen; Tertullian

Fausto, Vettore, succeeds Musurus 59n

Fendt, Tobias, *Monumenta sepulcrorum*, engraving from *60 illustration*

Ferdinand of Hapsburg, brother of Charles: arrives in Low Countries 38, 54n, 149, 269n; Gillis' opinion of 43; dedication of *Institutio principis christiani* to 54n, 56; impending coronation 173; Erasmus praises 251; tutor for 253, 271n, 272, 304; rumours of salary from 280; Erasmus' hopes for 379, 380, 398; Pace meets 387

Ferrara, Maciochius' press at 158

Ficino, Marsilio 101; portrait medal of *102 illustration*

Filelfo, Francesco, Eck cites 31–2

Fiorentino, Niccolò, medal of Ficino *102 illustration*

Fisher, John, bishop of Rochester: consulted on *Novum Testamentum* 106n; aid enlisted against Lee 216; *De unica Magdalena libri tres* 288–9, 292, 371; patron of studies 316; chancellor of Cambridge 362–3
- letters to 165, 288

Fisher, Robert, a dull student 218

Flaming, Johann, of Boppard 115, 151

Florence, Platonic academy 101

Flötner, Peter, design for stone relief *104 illustration*

Foxe, Richard, bishop of Winchester, founds Corpus Christi College 362, 405, 406
- letter to 383

France; French people: attitude to literature 128, 274, 370; admiration of Erasmus 141; Erasmus invited to 161, 271, 273; Erasmus reluctant to reside in 161, 163, 171; Luther's book sent to 193n; Longueil extols 227n; negotiations with Hapsburgs 265; fortunate in Francis I 273; war with England 358. *See also* Montpellier; Narbonne; Orléans; Noyon; Paris

Francis I, king of France: patron of Giustiniani 148, 149, 161; invitation to Erasmus 176n, 178, 179, 212, 234, 280, 287–8, 327–8, 350; prefers Erasmus to Budé 227, 230; will promote studies 267; seeks imperial crown 269n; Ruzé's mission for 270; Poncher and 275; Budé's mission for 332; alleged letter from 350;

devotion to peace 357
Francis of Assisi, St 88
Francis of Paola, St, canonization of 227
Franciscans; Friars Minor: Erasmus criticizes 22, 86, 88, 376, 396; promote Scotus and Bonaventure 75; unnamed friar at Breisach 114. *See also* Bonaventure; 'Cavillotus alias Dissutus'; Duns Scotus; Nicholas of Lyra; Standish
Frankfurt: fairs 41, 111, 166; proposed Diet for 173; Luther's book at 193n; Erasmus and Reuchlin meet in 368; imperial election in 377n
Friars Minor. *See* Franciscans
Friars Preacher. *See* Dominicans
Friedlieb, Franz (Irenicus), of Ettlingen, *Germaniae exegesis* a childish book 147
Froben, Hieronymus, printer in Basel 95n, 189
Froben, Johann, printer in Basel: letter of Gillis (mentioned) 42; Dorp and 50, 53; and *Enchiridion* 90; *Novum Testamentum* 98; and Hutten's *Nemo* 106; stupidity of 160; and Luther's works 191, 369n; greets Erasmus 193. *See also* Froben press
– letter to 156
Froben press: Pucci visits 95n; policies at 156n–157n, 158; Erasmus' advice about 158–9; Hollonius works for 191; works in progress (1518) 191; and *Auctarium* 213; and *Colloquia* 217n; type styles of 268; Erasmus at 386
Fust, Christine, wife of Peter Schöffer 255n
Fust, Johann, printer in Mainz 255

Galen, *De sanitate tuenda*: title page *100 illustration*; Linacre's translation 101, 129, 163, 381; *Therapeutice* 129
Galle, Philip, engraved portrait of Latomus *284 illustration*
Gallinarius (Henner), Eucharius, of Bretten 153
Gallinarius, Johannes, of Breisach 114
Gaza, Theodorus, translations of 101
Gebwiler, Johann, of Colmar 114, 155
Gembloux, abbey of: library 385, 396; monks 386
Genoa, Bernardo Boerio in 110
George of Saxony. *See* Saxony
George of Trebizond, translations of 101
Gerbel, Nikolaus 114
– letter to 153
Germany; German people: plague in 39, 41; Zasius' work in 95, 101; Erasmus' renown in 112, 141, 294; attitude to literature 128, 174, 222, 223, 273, 296; Eobanus adorns 133, 142; princes of as patrons 142, 380; invincible in arms 143; tithe for crusade 164, 173; promotes printing 255, 256; Swabian League 263; Ferdinand will rule 272; Melanchthon attacks theologians of 309; profits from Erasmus' work 330; young scholars in 369; Erasmus' hopes for 378. *See also* Austria; Bavaria; Burgundian Netherlands; Swabia; Thuringia; Württemberg; (cities): Augsburg; Bedburg; Bonn; Boppard; Breisach; Bremen; Butzbach; Colmar; Cologne; Erfurt; Frankfurt; Ingolstadt; Koblenz; Leipzig; Münster; Nürnberg; Speyer; Strasbourg; Trier; Wittenberg; Worms
Gerson, Jean, on conciliarism 298
Gertophius, J. *Recriminatio adversus Leum* 95n
Gillis, Pieter, of Antwerp: letter from Eichholz (mentioned) 111; carries book to la Marck 253; anger at Erasmus' criticis 315
– letters from 37, 42
Giustiniani, Agostino, bishop of Nebbio: visits Erasmus 148, 149, 160, 211; *Psalterium octaplum* 148, 149, 160; in *Apologia* 160–1, 211–12; critical of Erasmus 277

Glareanus, Henricus, poet royal in Paris 37, 99, 131; consulted on *Novum Testamentum* 107n; and Budé 180, 212, 214, 275, 411, 412
- letter to 189
Gnostopolitanus. *See* Cellarius
God: 'folly' of 24, 25; perfects souls in love 25; as Father 162, 347; against legalism 245; first duty of Christian 336; and goodness 347; reconciled to man 357; gifts to men 373–4. *See also* Jesus Christ; Holy Spirit
Gotha, Mutianus at 131n, 132n
Gouffier, Artus, seigneur of Boisy, grand master: mission to Narbonne 265; miniature portrait by Clouet *266 illustration*
Gratius, Ortwinus, *Lamentationes obscurorum virorum* 51, 66
Greece; Greeks: their texts of Scripture 16–17; heresies of 16, 17; mitigated force of law 241; Paul's conquest of 243, 244; glory of 271
Gregory I 'the Great,' St, pope 245
Gregory of Nazianzus, St, as poet 13
Grien, Hans Baldung, woodcut portrait of Rudolfinger *154 illustration*
Grimani, Domenico, cardinal of San Marco: patron of Erasmus 15; and approval for *Novum Testamentum* 96, 106n, 109
Grocyn, William: consulted about *Novum Testamentum* 107n; and Pseudo-Dionysius 238n
Guildford, Richard 363n
- letter to 363
Gutenberg, Johann, printer of Mainz 255n

Hackfurt (Bathodius), Lukas 155
Hapsburgs: negotiations with France 265; alliance with la Marck 333n; Sickingen in service of 399n. *See also* Charles of Hapsburg; Ferdinand of Hapsburg; Margaret of Austria; Maximilian I
Harris, John, secretary of More 37n
Hasebart, Aegidius, canon of Aachen 383
Hatten, Maternus, vicar of Speyer 114
- letter to 153
Heidelberg: Luther's disputation at 147n; Cellarius in 147n; Gallinarius at 153n
Heliodorus, and St Jerome 21
Henry III, count of Nassau, Eobanus' panegyric of 395
Henry VIII, king of England: Erasmus praises 62, 63, 359, 360, 364–5; summons Pace 62; offer to Erasmus 118, 163, 294; manuscript against heresy 292; patron of studies 317, 363, 378, 379, 380, 388, 405; and Campeggi 349n–350n; essay on prayer 360–1; desires imperial crown 387, 403
- letter to 356
Hering, Loy, sculpture attributed to *328 illustration*
Herman of Friesland, Haio, of Emden 190
Herodotus 228, 271
Hesiod, *Scutum* 118; *Works and Days* 343n
Hilary of Poitiers, St: and Scripture text 5, 16; Vulgate not his 97; more learned than Augustine 182
Holland; Hollanders: unsuitable travelling companions 159; rumours of Erasmus in 330
Hollonius, Lambertus: and Froben press 99n; and manuscript of *Colloquia* 217n, 219
- letter from 190
Holy Spirit: inspiration and language of Bible 8, 12, 13, 20, 28; Erasmus prays for assistance of 20; three sins against 314–15
Homer, works: *Battle of the Frogs and the Mice* 305; *Iliad* 66, 117, 127, 225n, 234, 343, 354, 363; *Odyssey* 46, 273n
Hondt, Jan de, of St Paul, Waes
- letter to 226
Hoogstraten, Jacob of: in Antwerp 43;

Apologia against Reuchlin 43, 67, 166; Buschius' tale about 148; in Louvain 149–50; may settle in Louvain 156, 166

Hopfer, Hieronymus, engraving of Sickingen *400 illustration*

Horace, works: *Ars poetica* 9, 229n, 372n; *Epistles* 11, 33, 108, 118, 326n, 332, 338n, 366n; *Odes* 325n, 361; *Satires* 218

Hovius, Johannes, servant of Erasmus 117, 121, 124; Erasmus mistrusts discretion of 187

– letter from, to Maarten Lips 187

Hué, Guillaume, dean of Paris 404

Hugo of Saint-Cher 22

Hugshofen, abbey 72

Hummelberg, Michael: Rhenanus' letter to (mentioned) 161n, 162n; letter to Rhenanus (mentioned) 163n

Hummelshain, Anna, wife of Heinrich Stromer 397

Hungary; Hungarians: admiration for Erasmus 141; letters from 165; studies esteemed in 174, 303

Hus, Jan 15

Hutten, Hans von, cousin of Ulrich 263n

Hutten, Ulrich von: at Diet of Augsburg 105; charming conversation 142; proposes German crusade 168n; promising scholar 369, 378; letters to (lost) 397; and Albert of Brandenburg 403

– works: *Ad principes Germaniae* 325; *Aula, dialogus* 106, 261, 324; *De guaiaci medicina* 124n; *Epistola obscurorum virorum* 351; *Febris* 261, 324, 370; *Nemo* 106, 351, 370; *Phalarismus* 262, 324; *Triumphus Reuchlini* 263, title page *264 illustration*, 325

– letters from 261, 397

– letter to 324

Huyn van Amstenrade, Werner, vice-provost of Aachen 119, 383

Hymenaeus, condemned by St Paul 239

India, Schalbe would follow Erasmus to 388

Ingolstadt: Rhegius at 36; Reuchlin moves to 399n; Andronicus in 407n

Innocent I, pope 18

Irenicus. *See* Friedlieb

Isaac, son of Abraham 78

Ismail, shah, contacts with Venice 58n

Isocrates 59

Italy; Italians: Lee ignores 7; claims Stridon 33; Thurzo in 45; Erasmus projects visit to 51, 53; Stokesley in 63n; excelled in rhetoric 101; superior literature of 128, 370; admiration for Erasmus 141; scholarship overrated 222, 223; Aristotelian sermons in 246; glory of 271; Andronicus in 407n. *See also* Bologna; Ferrara; Florence; Genoa; Milan; Naples; Padua; Rome; Venice

Jacobus, Magdalius, of Gouda, letter to Marcaeus (mentioned) 2n

James, St, pilgrimages to shrine of 85, 143

James V, king of Scotland 357

Jerome, St 5, 97; emendations to Scripture 6; and Scripture translations 7, 8, 20; style of 9, 22–3, 32; errors in Scripture 10, 30; disparages philosophy 13; and Septuagint 13, 15; prefaces to Vulgate 14; used Greek texts 16; published without approbation 19; translation of Pentateuch 21; Erasmus dissents from 23; theologians interpret 26; mistakes in 28, 318; and Augustine 31–5, 335; Eck should read 33; and Pelagius 34; and Luciferians 34; defends monasticism 88; Erasmus consults 97; penchant for anger 178, 181; Lee denigrates 183, 210; and pagan classics 205–6, 233; Lips should read 260

– works: *Adversus Jovinianum* 21, 34; *Adversus Rufinum* 15, 21, 34, 205–6; *Commentarii in Micheam* 28; *Contra Vigilantium* 21; *De viris il-*

lustribus 3; lives of the evangelists 194; *Praefatio in Pentateuchum* 15; *Prologus in Ieremiam* 8; *Retractationes* 8, 34
Jerome of Prague 15
Jerusalem, pilgrimages to 85, 143
Jesus Christ: words of, and grammar 7; Erasmus labours for 10, 20, 32, 126, 145, 327, 351, 372; 'folly' of 24; instruction to evangelists 29; and apostles' mistakes 30; 'philosophy of' 34, 36, 75–9, 87–90, 375; mercy of 74, 76; died for multitude 75; teachings differ from scholastic quarrels 75, 76, 85; one pastor and teacher 77; the 'Rock' 78; Christians form his body 81–2; goal of all 82, 83; sacramental presence 85, 239; and pilgrimages 143; and Pharisees 150; as first principle 162; genealogy of 162; duties towards 176; and St Paul 244; some pervert his word 247–8; gifts of 281; Karlstadt devoted to 283; Erasmus hopes to gain 301, 302; goal of all ministry 327; riches add nothing to 342; chooses the blessed 343; and the Father 347; necessity to preach 374–5; Erasmus as gift from 388; peaceful spirit of 392–3, 407
Jews: rebelled against Christ 16; legal spirit 86, 87, 244; St Paul conquered 244, 392; superstitious 244. *See also* Essenes; Pharisees
Johann of Westphalia 151n, 152
John Chrysostom, St: and errors in Scripture 10; used Greek texts 16; and inspiration 29; defends monasticism 88; Erasmus consults 97; commentary on John 182; Greek liturgy (spurious) 238
Jonas, Justus (Jobst Koch), of Nordhausen: Eobanus' dedicatory epistle to 134n; carries gift to Erasmus 139n; engraved portrait of *144 illustration;* visit to Erasmus 355, 388, 394; Erasmus praises 389–90
– letters to 145, 373
Josephus, Flavius: *Antiquitates Judaicae* 2; *On the Sovereign Rule of Reason* (attributed to) 2–3; and genealogy of Christ 163
Julianus, Salvianus 71
Juvenal 244, 338n

Karlstadt (Bodenheim), Andreas Rudolf 283; and Leipzig disputation 223, 225, 310n; attacks Eck's 'Obeliscs' 223n; woodcut portrait of *224 illustration*
Kierher, Johann, of Sélestat 153
Koblenz: Erasmus at 115, 151n; Hoogstraten rejected in 148; bishop's official in 148
Kopp (Coppus), Gregor, of Kalbe 398
Korvei, abbey, manuscript of Tacitus 255n

Lachner, Gertrud, wife of Johann Froben 193
Lachner, Wolfgang 157n
La Marck. *See* Marck
Lang, Johann, of Erfurt
– letters to 134, 395
Lang, Matthäus, cardinal, bishop of Gurk: Ursinus in service of 47; Staupitz and 134n
Lascaris, Johannes: in France 110; colleague of Glareanus 190; absence from Rome 195; and Erasmus 222
Latimer, William: consulted on *Novum Testamentum* 106n–107n, 160
Latomus, Jacobus (Jacques Masson), of Cambron: *De trium linguarum* 283n, 285, 290, 306n–307n, 312, 380, 398; engraved portrait of *284 illustration;* confrontation with Erasmus 307; agreement on ethics 345
Laurinus (Lauwerijns), Marcus, canon of Bruges: visit with Gillis 45; with Erasmus 125; copy of *Novum Testamentum* 183
Lee, Edward: controversy over *Novum instrumentum* 4–26, 107n, 162–3, 180n, 181, 182–3, 184–5, 186, 187,

210–11, 234, 277n, 289–90, 316, 382, 383–4, 385; Gertophius' book against 95n; letters against 153n; and Erasmus' canonical state 184; Erasmus enlists Fisher against 216; and Lips 259, 349n

Lefèvre d'Etaples, Jacques: quarrel with Erasmus 7, 51, 69, 107n, 178, 200–3, 204–11, 213–14, 235; commentary on Paul 7; Lee fails to cite 21; regrets quarrel with Erasmus 42–3; Erasmus wishes peace with 61n, 63–4, 161; translations by 101; defenders in Cambridge 166; Erasmus' letter to (lost) 208; and text of St Cyprian 267n; Erasmus praises 274; and the Magdalens 288–9; Fisher's attack on 371. *See also* Erasmus, original works: *Apologia ad Fabrum*

Leipzig, university: Textoris at 141n; Cellarius at 147n; Mosellanus and Melanchthon at 221n; Andronicus at 223, 407n; disputation (1519) 223, 225, 310; Mosellanus' inaugural lecture at 283n; Löblein at 313n

Leo x (Giovanni de' Medici), pope: approves *New Testament* 15, 19, 20, 98, 323, 350; proposed crusade 72n, 76; *Novum instrumentum* dedicated to 96n; abuses papal office 138–9; makes Albert of Brandenburg a cardinal 168, 193; patron of letters 195; library of 255n; justice of 299; devoted to peace 357; diplomatic defeat 358n, 366; Erasmus serves faithfully 372; and la Marck's view of Luther 391n

– letter from 106

Leoni, Ambrogio, works: (trans) Actuarius *De urinis* 61; *Castigationes in Averroem* 61; *De Nola patria* 61; *Novum opus quaestionum in philosophia et medicinae scientia* 127

– letter from 56

– letter to 126

Leoniceno, Niccolò 222; medical translations 101

Le Roy, Louis, biography of Budé 227n

Le Sauvage, Jean, chancellor of Burgundy 39; death of 52, 161, 163, 171

– letter to 54

Licentius, and Augustine 9

Liège: Erasmus passes through 3n; Cellarius in 147n; diplomatic alignment of 237

Linacre, Thomas: Erasmus praises 63, 101, 128–9; translation of Galen (title page, with portrait *100 illustration*) 101, 129, 163, 381; Erasmus greets 164; admires Clement 215; on Privy Council 387–8

Lips, Maarten, his brother 188

– letters from 185, 258;

– letters to 3, 180, 181, 182, 183, 186, 187 (from Thomas Hovius), 258, 283, 332, 349

Livy (Titus Livius): admirers of 46, 304; Erasmus compared to 228; new edition of 253 (title page 254 *illustration*); glory of Italy 271

Löblein, Johann (Ochsenfurt) 313

Lombard. *See* Peter Lombard

London: treaty in 357n; St Paul's 358n

Longicampianus (Gusebel), Johannes 115

– letter to 152

Longueil, Christophe de 109n 195; panegyric of St Louis 286

– letter from, to Jacques Lucas 226

– letter to 286

Louis ii, king of Hungary 46, 304

Louis ix, St, king of France 286

Louvain: Erasmus ill in 121, 164, 165, 167, 171, 180, 195; Eobanus visits 147; Hoogstraten in 148; Giustiniani visits 148, 149, 160, 211; plague in 152, 173; Hollonius visits 190; rumours of Erasmus' death in 322; Erasmus absent from 327; *Novum Testamentum* arrives in 332n; Andronicus seeks Erasmus in 408, 409

- university; Erasmus warns about Lee 4n; Erasmus' repute in 38, 307; Dorp at 49n; parsimony of 52; Erasmus' work in 106n; Longicampianus at 115, 152n; Cellarius in 147n; attacks Luther 193n, 294; Carinus in 257n; Nesen in 257n; Vives at 272n; Erasmus' troubles in 307, 311; Antoon van Bergen at 330n; enemies of studies in 378, 409; Hasebart at 383n; Erasmus defends 410
- faculty of theology: Erasmus in 15; and litigation with la Marck 238, 391n; Latomus in 283n, 285, 290; censors Hutten's books 325; attributes others' works to Erasmus 370–1, 391; criticizes Erasmus 380, 381, 382; Luther's books and 391, 392
- College of the Lily: Erasmus at 113n; Haio Herman at 190n; Delft at 259n; Becker and Castere at 280n
- Collegium Trilingue 52, 110n; opposition to 67; Baerland at 155n, 156; Buschius seeks post at 155n; Rescius at 191n; controversies over 277, 283n; Croy a patron of 306n

Low Countries. *See* Burgundian Netherlands

Lucan 304

Lucas, Jacques, dean of Orléans
- letter to, from Longueil 226

Lucian, *De saltatione* 204

Luke, St 30. *See also* Bible, New Testament

Lupset, Thomas, lectures at Oxford 367n

Luther, Martin: Pucci works against 95n–96n; confrère of Lang 135n; in danger 147; Heidelberg disputation 147n; Augsburg disputation 147n; and Cajetanus 167n–168n; and Froben press 191, 193; admired by Hollonius 191, 193; Erasmus wary of 193n; Melanchthon recommends 221; Berquin admires 268n; Latomus attacks 290; Erasmus defers judgment 292; Capito defends 294; Erasmus defends 296–9; Erasmus' estimation 309, 368–9; Leipzig disputation 310n; unnamed critic 313; Frederick's opinion of 355; works rushed to print 369; and Louvain 391, 392; support of good men 396
- works: *Ad Leonum X*, title page *192 illustration*, at Froben press 193n; 'Asteriscs' against Eck 139n; commentary on Psalms 393; *Ein Sermon von Ablass und Gnade* 369; Ninety-five Theses 79n, 137–8, 246n, 282, 296, 351, 369; *Sermo de poenitentia* 369
- letter from 281
- letter to 391

Maccabees, martyrdom of 2

Mainz: Erasmus in 115; St Victor 115; Friedlieb in 147; Longicampianus in 152n; printers in 255; cathedral school 256; Zobel in 256n

Malaise, Nicolas de, abbot of St Hubert 156
- letter to 173

Manuzio, Aldo: compared with Froben 53; reported Erasmus' death 57; Erasmus recalls 126, 129–30; praised Linacre 128; proposed academy 129

Manuzio, Paolo, Erasmus greets 130

Marcaeus, Helias
- letter to 2

Marcionites 84

Marck, Antoine de la, abbot of Beaulieu-en-Argonne
- letter to 333

Marck, Erard de la, prince-bishop of Liège: vellum copy of *Novum Testamentum* 41n; relations with Erasmus 118, 121, 326, 335; patron of scholars 156, 174; meets Hapsburgs in Mechelen 269n; seeks tutor for Ferdinand 272; read Frederick of Saxony's letter 389; attitude to Luther 391n, 392

- letters to 236, 252
Marck, Robert de la, father of Antoine 333, 334
Margaret of Austria 250n; and imperial elections 269; meets with Pace 387
Martens, Dirk, printer in Louvain: described by Dorp 50; compared with Froben 53; Erasmus' convalescence with 113n, 121, 124–5; and Erasmus' books 232; and *Paraphrasis in Corinthios* 252; and Luther's books 369n
Maruffo, Raffaele, and Erasmus' affairs 169
Mary, the mother of Jesus: 'letters' in Eobanus' *Heroines* 133n; her song 'Magnificat' 314
Mary Magdalen, St: 'letters' in Eobanus' *Heroines* 133n; controversy over 288–9
Massilia, England surpasses 359
Massinissa, king of Numidia 56
Matthew, St, mistakes in Greek 30. *See also* Bible, New Testament
Maximilian I, emperor 47; Wimpfeling's oration to 91n; at Diet of Augsburg 105, 168; death of 236, 274; in Antwerp 314
Mazzolini. *See* Prierias
Mechelen: Erasmus at 269n, 326, 379; Erasmus' critics in 307
Meghen, Pieter, Pace and 292
Melanchthon, Philippus: Erasmus praises 142, 318; attitude to Erasmus 147; sponsors Longicampianus 152n; Mosellanus recommends 225; Luther describes 282; hymn to the angels (lost) 309; inaugural lecture at Wittenberg 309; letter to Spalatinus (mentioned) 309n; letter to (mentioned) 393
- letter from 220
- letter to 308
Memphis, pyramids at 406
Menard of Hoorn: courier for Erasmus 149, 153, 157, 159; work on *Novum Testamentum* 158, 160; dies of plague 191
Middelburg, Ferdinand visits 38
Milan, Erasmus' rumoured in 180
Minorites. *See* Franciscans
Mithridates, king of Pontus 339
Montanus, errors of 240
Montpellier, negotiations at 265, 267n, 401
More, Thomas: *Epigrammata* 37; Gillis wants news of 45; Erasmus praises 63; married twice 83n; and Erasmus' affairs 176; *Utopia*, reprint of 191; complaint to about Lee 292; defends Greek studies 317; negotiates peace 358n; *Utopia* attributed to Erasmus 371; on Privy Council 387; recommended Claymond 407
- letters from 37, 215
- letter to 215
Morillon, Guy 39
Mosellanus, Petrus: inaugural lecture at Leipzig 283n; *Oratio de ratione disputandi* 310n; *Oratio de variorum linguarum cognitione paranda* 310, 312, 370
- letter from 221
- letter to 310
Moses, and the law 244
Mountjoy. *See* Blount
Mühldorf am Inn (Bavaria) 47
Münster, Caesarius at 112
Muscovites, defeated by Poles 105
Musurus, Marcus: his successor in Venice 59; tomb of *60 illustration*; death of 65; Erasmus and 126, 222; successful career 128
Mutianus Rufus (Mut), Conradus, of Gotha
- letter to 131
Myconius, Osvaldus, of Lucerne
- letter to 98

Nanni (Annius), Giovanni 162n, 163
Naples 173n
Narbonne, negotiations in 265
Nepos, Jacobus: in Antwerp 50; proofreads *Novum Testamentum* 50n, 107n, 160, 191, 194; and Dorp 52

Nero, emperor 342, 346
Nesen, Wilhelm 275; and Carinus 257; Bérault and 267n, 404; letter from (lost) 277; *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium* 285n
– letter to 277
Netherlands. *See* Burgundian Netherlands
Neuenahr, Hermann von, count, canon of Cologne 112; Erasmus with 2n, 113n, 117–18, 165, 195; conflict with Hoogstraten 148; sends news of diet 173; absent from Bedburg 191
– letter to 149
Neve (Nève), Jan de: letter to (mentioned) 42; Becker greets 280
Nicholas I 'the Great,' St, pope, cited in *Sentences* 243
Nicholas of Lyra 22
Nile river, floods of 30
Nola, Leoni's history of 127
Novatianus, errors of 240
Noyon, treaty of 265n
Nürnberg, letters from 165

Ochsenfurt. *See* Löblein
Ockham; Ockhamists. *See* William of Ockham
Oea, riot in 6
Oecolampadius, Johannes: obtains doctorate 193; post in Augsburg 193; supports Luther 369n
Origen: and errors in Scripture 10, 30; disparages philosophy 13; used Greek texts 16; school of 17; surpasses Augustine in philosophy 35; Erasmus consults 97; works of 253
Orléans, university, Eichholz at 111n
Orsza, battle of (1514) 105
Ovid: 'Christian' adaptations of 24; *Metamorphoses* 78, 366n; *Amores* 126; Eobanus compared to 133, 142, 155, 301
Oxford: Stokesley at 63n; Clement at 215, 367n; Vives at 272n, 367n; good studies criticized at 316–17; Erasmus praises 362; Corpus Christi College 362, 367n, 405, 406; Wolsey's patronage 362, 367; Lupset at 367n; Cardinal College 367n; Magdalen College 405n

Pace, Richard: in Switzerland 62; close to More 63; *De fructu* 163; and manuscript for *Antibarbari* 218; defends Greek studies 317; Fabri inquires about 331; with Erasmus in Brussels 356n; speech at 1518 treaty 358n; and imperial election 377n, 377, 379, 381, 387, 403; recommendations for 377, 379, 381; recommended Claymond 407
– letter from 292
– letters to 163, 353
Pactolus, gold of 389
Padua, Erasmus at 320
Paleotti, Camillo, death of 65
Pannonius, Janus, bishop of Pécs 303
Papin, Antoine, of Ath, abbot of Gembloux
– letter from 396
– letter to 385
Paris: Birckmann in 45; Erasmus' invitation to 176n, 178, 179; Erasmus and Budé in 197n; *Colloquia* written in 217; Budé's house in 231; Ruzé in 270; Vives' visit to 401, 410n
– university: faithful to Vulgate 7; Glareanus at 37; Haio Herman at 190n; Vives at 252; Carinus at 257n; Bérault and Nesen at 267n, 268; Giustiniani criticizes Erasmus at 277; Andrelini and Balbi in 351n; Priccardus in 382n
– faculty of theology: Baer's achievements in 50; theological disputations in 74; theologians as sophists 268; theologians differ 298; Melanchthon attacks theologians of 309
– Collège de Montaigu: Vives at 272n; Latomus at 285n
Parra, Juan de la, physician to Prince Ferdinand
– letter to 250

Parthenius, Tranquillus Andronicus. *See* Andronicus Parthenius
Paul, St: imperfect Greek of 8, 30; differentiates gifts 20; and 'folly' of Christ 24, 25; use of Scriptures 28–9; contended with Barnabas 65; apostolic spirit of 77; attitude to Corinthians and Galatians 82; warns against ceremonies 86; warns against licence 87; Erasmus compared to 223; Erasmus praises 238; Christ the sole goal of 323; would reform Rome 323; argument with St Peter 335, 384; attitude to riches 342; eschewed violence 392. *See also* Bible, New Testament; Erasmus, original works: *Paraphrases*
Pelagius 34
Pelayo, Alvaro 75
Pellicanus, Conradus, and Luther 369n
Pericles 244
Peripatetics 336, 341, 343, 344. *See also* Aristotle
Persia, conquered by Turks 58
Persius 108, 260n
Peter Lombard: Erasmus dissents from 22, 23; *Sentences* and commentaries on 74, 243, 245, 313n
Peter, St: impetuous talk 26; lapses in epistles 28; apostolic spirit of 77; Christ rebukes 81; warns against licence 87; obeyed God, not man 90; argument with St Paul 335, 384; attitude to riches 342
Petit, Jean, bookseller in Paris, plans to reprint works of Jerome 158
Peutinger, Konrad, of Augsburg, at diet (1518) 105
Pfefferkorn, Johann 66
Pforzheim, manuscript of Melanchthon's hymn in 309n
Pharisees 81, 150
Philip of Macedon, Henry VIII likened to 361
Philistines 78
Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni 101
Pilate, Pontius 80
Pirckheimer, Willibald, of Nürnberg 222
– letter to 66
Pins, Jean de, of Toulouse 274
Pisa, Jacobus, tutor to King Louis II 46, 303–4
Plato 143; retort to Diogenes Laertius 203–4; ignored by apostles 13
– works: *Euthydemus* 336n; *Laws* 336n; *Phaedrus* 24; *Philebus* 336n; *Republic* 83, 339–40, 345
Plautus: style of 11; *Epidicus* 383n
Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis* 57, 319n
Pliny the Younger 199, 229; *Letters* 46n
Plutarch, Ricchieri's interpretation of 319n
– works: *Caesar* 339n; *Cato the Younger* 339n; *Cicero* 337n; *Demosthenes* 337n; *Lycurgus* 203n
Poitiers, Longueil at 286n
Poland; Poles: victory over Muscovites 105; letters from 165. *See also* Cracow
Pomponazzi, Pietro 246n
Poncher, Etienne, bishop of Paris: and invitation to Erasmus 131, 179, 212, 234, 235, 275, 402; letter to (lost) 212; named archbishop of Sens 265; mission to Narbonne 265; will write to Erasmus 265; mission to Montpellier 267n; awaits *Novum Testamentum* 268; Erasmus praises 289; mission to Spain 289; London oration 358n
Poppenruyter, Johann, of Mechelen 73
Porphyry, works of 34
Potkyn, William, notary public, blocks Erasmus' annuity 169, 171
Prague, attitudes to Erasmus in 322, 323
Priccardus, Leonardus, canon of Aachen 191
– letter from 382
Prierias (Silvestro Mazzolini, of Priero), book against Luther 137, 149

Proost (Probst), Jacob, of Ieper, favours Luther's views 393
Prudentius, as poet 13
Psallians, errors of 246
Pseudo-Ambrose 241–2
Pseudo-Dionysius, *Hierarchies* 238
Pseudo-Philo, and genealogy of Christ 162n
Ptolemy I 'Soter' 253n
Ptolemy II 'Philadelphus' 253; Henry VIII likened to 361; Wolsey likened to 367
Pucci, Antonio, papal legate in Switzerland 51, 61: Erasmus meets 62; and papal approval of *Novum Testamentum* 106n, 109, 195; return from Switzerland 110; and *Julius exclusus* 216
– letter to 95
Pucci, Lorenzo, cardinal of Santi Quattro Coronati, and papal brief 95n, 194
Pythagoras: Erasmus compared to 56, 58; noble appearance of 346

Quintilian: Augustine cited 12; proposed ideal for orators 83; *Institutio oratoria* 229n, 242–3, 244n; Andronicus' lectures on 407n

Rescius, Rutgerus, Hollonius writes to 191
Reuchlin, Johann: quarrel in Cologne 43, 66–9, 149, 190, 366; dignity of 142; Erasmus' attitude to 147, 222; Lee critical of 182n, 183, 210; Hutten's poem on 263; Erasmus met 368; *Defensio* 368; house spared in siege 399; moves to Ingolstadt 399n; *De rudimentis hebraicis* 406n
Reutlingen, Württemberg attack on 263
Rhegius, Urbanus, Erasmus greets 36
Rhenanus, Beatus: Gillis greets 38; Dorp praises 50; invited by Pucci 62, Zasius greets 72; and Froben press 99n, 157n, 159; Spiegel greets 105–6; Bombace greets 110; Budé's letter offended 131; Erasmus praises 142, 367; Epistle 867 mentioned 148, 149, 151, 152, 153, 160, 163, 164; attitude to Hollonius 191; knows Erasmus' esteem for Budé 197, 275; letter from (lost) 324; dedicates *Ratio verae theologiae* to Fabri 331, 387; and Luther 369n
– works: edits *Auctarium* 213; edits *Colloquia* (1518) 217n, 219; preface for More's *Epigrammata* 37; edits Pannonius' poems 303n; *Res Germanicae* 387; other works 387n
– letter to 112
Rhine valley, plague in 99n
Rhodes, Colossus at 406
Riario, Raffaele, cardinal of San Giorgio: patron of Erasmus 15; and approval for *Novum Testamentum* 96, 106n, 109
Ricchieri, Lodovico: *Antiquae lectiones* 319–20; collection of proverbs 320
– letter from 319
Robbyns, Jan, dean of Mechelen 156n, 307n
Robyns, Jan, a Carmelite, critic of Erasmus 306n, 307–8, 316
Rome, ancient: Jerome and 21, 33; victories of 29; Livy in 46, 304; St Paul and 238, 243, 244; Cicero in 342
Rome, modern: Piso in 46; pilgrimages to 85; Vitellius in 103n; Santa Maria dell'Anima 118n–119n; attracted Musurus 128; Erasmus rumoured in 180; Lascaris' absence from 195; Lucas in 227; Jean de Pins in 274n; Melanchthon's attack on 309; needs St Paul to reform 323; England surpasses 359; papal tyranny in 396
Rottweil (Swabia), school in 99n
Rubellus, Michael, schoolmaster in Rottweil 99n
Rudolfinger, Johann, vicar in Strasbourg 114; woodcut portrait of 154 *illustration*; Erasmus greets 155
Rufinus of Aquileia, and Jerome 15, 21, 34, 205–6, 383–4

Ruser, Johann, Erasmus greets 91
Ruthall, Thomas
- letter to 384
Ruzé, Louis, deputy prefect of Paris: partisan of Budé 131; and Erasmus-Lefèvre quarrel 202; Erasmus greets 214; sends Longueil's letter to Erasmus 227n, 286; relations with Erasmus 235; awaits *Novum Testamentum* 268; and royal invitation 402n; sends greetings 405
- letter from 269
- letter to 272

Saarburg, Matthias von, of Koblenz 117
- letter to (?) 151
St Truiden: Erasmus passes through 121; abbey, reforms at 385n
Sallust: style of 11; Budé and 228, 271
Sandrien, Cornelia, wife of Pieter Gillis 45
Santiago de Compostela, pilgrimages to 85, 143
Sapidus (Witz), Johannes 91
Satan, Paul delivers adulterer to 239
Saxony, Frederick of, duke, elector: patron of studies 133; portrait medal of *138 illustration*; dedication to 139; Erasmus praises 256; attitude towards Erasmus 294; and Luther 309; letter from (lost) 355, 389; Erasmus greets 381
- letter from 354
- letters to 295, 390
Saxony, George of, duke: portrait medal of *138 illustration*; patron of Mosellanus 222; at Leipzig disputation 223, 225; Mosellanus' attitude towards 225; patron of studies 317
Saxony, John of, portrait medal of *138 illustration*
Schabler, Anna, marriage to Bruno Amerbach 155, 157n
Schade, Peter. *See* Mosellanus
Schalbe, Kaspar: carries gift to Erasmus 139n; visit to Erasmus 355, 373n, 390
- letter from 388
- letter to 393
Schiner, Matthäus, cardinal of Sion 98; clarifies criticism of Erasmus 314
Schoenraid (or Schoenrode), Johann, canon of Aachen 118, 191, 383
Schöffer, Johann, printer in Mainz 152n; edition of Livy 255
Schöffer, Peter, printer in Mainz 255n
Schürer, Matthias, printer in Strasbourg: edition of Curtius 36; hosts Erasmus 114; and Gerbel 153n; Erasmus wants news of 155; prints Luther's works 193
Scipio Africanus, Publius Cornelius 346
Scotland: scholars faithful to Vulgate 7; studies esteemed in 174; Erasmus out of touch with 357n
Scotus. *See* Duns Scotus
Scythians, defeated by Poles 105
Sélestat, literary society 91
Selim I, sultan 58n
Seneca: *Oedipus* 41n; *Letters* 63; digressions of 229; style of 252, 353–4
Septuagint, set aside by Jerome 14. *See also* Bible, Old Testament
Severus, Alexander, emperor 361
Sickingen, Franz von: and Hutten 399, 401; portrait of *400 illustration*
Sigismund I, king of Poland: portrait of *104 illustration*; victory over Muscovites 105
Silvius, an unidentified Frenchman 109
Simoniacs, errors of 246
Sixtinus, Johannes, of Friesland, writes to Gillis 45
Šlechta, Jan, letter from (lost) 322
- letter to 321
Smith, John, servant of Erasmus 164
- letter to 176

Socrates: patience of 316; virtue of 341, 342, 343, 346

Sophronius, lives of the evangelists 194

Sorbonne. *See* Paris, faculty of theology

Spain; Spaniards: take offence easily 141; Luther's book sent to 193n

Spalatinus, Georgius, chancellor of Saxony 354n; at Diet of Augsburg 105; defends Luther 295n; letter from (lost) 389

– letter to 389

Speyer: Erasmus passes through 114, 120, 147; woodcut view of *122–3 illustration*; Gallinarius at 153n

Spiegel, Jakob, of Sélestat

– letter from 103

Stab (Stabius), Johann, court historian to Maximilian I, at Diet of Augsburg 105

Standish, Henry, Erasmus satirizes 22

Staupitz, Johann von: Erasmus praises 134, 137; portrait of *136 illustration*

Steinheim, castle 261

Stoics 336–7, 341–3, 345–7

Stokesley, John, Erasmus praises 63

Strasbourg: Erasmus passes through 114, 120; Gallinarius at 153; Gerbel at 153n; Zobel at 256n; Carinus at 257n

Stridon, birthplace of Jerome 33

Stromer Heinrich, of Auerbach: at Diet of Augsburg 105; admires Erasmus' work 397–8; his wife 397

Sturm, Jakob, of Strasbourg, defends Erasmus 315

Stuttgart: Reuchlin's house in 399; surrenders to Swabian League 399

Succhetti, Francesco, of Pavia, and Ricchieri 320

Sucket, Antoon 156n

'Suda,' a Greek lexicon 3

Sudermann, Johann, precenter of Aachen: hosts Erasmus 119, 191n; greets Erasmus 383

Suetonius, *Augustus* 270n

Swabia, Cajetanus papal legate to 297

Switzerland; Swiss: Pucci and Bombace in 61; penchant for war 62; Wimpfeling's advice to 91n; Pucci seeks troops in 95n; and Myconius 99; negotiates about Württemberg 330n

Symmachus, and Ausonius 199

Syria: Greek spoken in 29; conquered by Turks 58

Tacitus, Cornelius, *Annals* 255

Taleus, Cyprianus, of Venice 190

Talmud, and Reuchlin 368

Tarasconio, Evangelista, of Parma, papal secretary 108, 109, 110

Tartars, defeated by Poles 105

Terence, *Phormio* 33, 219n

Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 252n

Textoris (Eckart), Jodocus, of Winsheim 141

Thebes, statue of Memnon 406

Theodorus of Gaza. *See* Gaza

Theodorici (Dierckx), Jacobus, of Hoorn

– letter to 300

Theodosius, Henry VIII likened to 361

Theophylact: commentary on Paul 38n; Erasmus' authority 250

Thomas Aquinas, St; Thomists: commentary on Boethius (spurious) 11, 12; published without approbation 19, 20; dissent from 22, 23; novelties of 23; cited by Lee 24; *Secunda secundae* 74; Dominicans promote 75; Thomists as sophists 268; Erasmus' attitude to 327; *Commentary on Nicomachean Ethics* 336n

Thucydides 228, 271

Thule 388

Thuringia, Albert of Brandenburg in 261

Thurzo, Johannes 49; patron of Ursinus 305

– letter from 45 (*44 illustration*)

- letter to 303
Tienen 121
Titus, St: Greek style of 30; Paul's companion 243
Tongeren, Erasmus in 120, 124, 171
Torresani, Andrea, of Asola 130
Trajan, emperor: noble appearance 346; Henry VIII likened to 361
Trebatius Testa, Gaius 62, 199
Tricaglio, G.M., *Dictionum Graecarum thesaurus* 158
Trier: St Simeon 117; as semi-French 222
Truchsess, Thomas, dean of Speyer: hosts Erasmus 141; Erasmus greets 153
Tübingen, siege of 397
Tunstall, Cuthbert: vellum copy of *Novum Testamentum* 40 *illustration*, 41; Erasmus praises 63; consulted on *Novum Testamentum* 107n; has copy of letter to Rhenanus 163; Budé and 207; negotiates peace 358n; recommended Claymond 407
- letter to 159
Turks: threaten war 58, 65, 128; proposed crusade against 72n, 75–6, 84, 91, 95n, 103, 167n, 358n; tyranny of 291
Turlupins 25
Tutorius (Voocht?), Rumoldus, of Antwerp, manuscript epitaph of Erasmus 41n
Tychonius 316

Ulpian, Zasius compared to 101
Ulrich of Württemberg. *See* Württemberg
Ursinus Velius, Caspar 46, 47
- works: *Genethliacon Erasmi* 46, 47, 48, 304,305; *Poemata* 48–9; poem to Thurzo 49
- letter from 47
- letter to 304
Ursula, St, legend and relics of 3
Utenheim, Christoph, bishop of Basel, Erasmus greets 149
Utrecht, Council of 190n

Vadianus, Joachim, letter from (mentioned) 99n
Valla, Lorenzo: Lee criticizes 7, 10; *Elegantiae* 218; and Pseudo-Dionysius 238n
Varnbüler, Ulrich, of St Gallen: hosts Erasmus 115; portrait by Dürer *116 illustration*
Varro, *Menippean Satires* 383n
Vaux, Joan, mother of Henry Guildford 365
Velius. *See* Ursinus
Venice: senate of 58; Greek lectures in 59; Erasmus recalls 126; Jean de Pins in 274n
Vessem, Bartholomeus 156
Vienna, Andronicus in 407n
Virgil: grudge against Nola 127; ordered *Aeneid* destroyed 265
- works *Aeneid* 57n, 101, 265, 325n, 338n, 361n; *Culex* (spurious) 48n; *Eclogues* 6n, 255n; *Georgics* 127, 132n, 338n, 378n
Vitellius, Erasmus (Erazm Ciołek), of Cracow, bishop of Płock, *Oratio in Augusten. conventu ... habita*, preface to 103n, 105
Viterbo, Hutten's fight in 325
Vives, Juan Luis, of Valencia: proposed as tutor for Ferdinand 251–2; lectures at Oxford 272n, 367n; influence on Croy 336n; Croy praises 344; meets Budé 401; Erasmus greets 410; carries letter from Budé 411
- works: *Declamationes Syllanae* 250n; *In pseudo-dialecticos* 272n; *Opuscula varia* 272n
- letter to 271
Vladislav II Jagiello, king of Hungary and Bohemia 321
Volz, Paul 145
- letter to 72
Vroye, Joost, of Gavere, Becker greets 280
'Vulgarius,' spurious commentator on St Paul 38n
Vulgate. *See* Bible

Wallensis, Thomas 11n, 24n
Warham, William, archbishop of Canterbury, one of Erasmus' 'Williams' 340, 344, 348
- letter to 169
Wentford, Roger: consulted on *Novum Testamentum* 107n; and manuscript of *Colloquia* 217n
Werter, Johann 131n–132n, 143
- letter to 143
William of Ockham; Ockhamists 75, 268
Wimpfeling, Jakob: Erasmus greets 91; proposes Swiss join crusade 91n; *De integritate libellus* 91
Wittenberg, university: founded by Frederick 133n; Lang, Staupitz, and Luther at 134n; Longicampianus at 152n; Melanchthon at 220n; Mosellanus at 221n; Erasmus esteemed at 294; Proost at 393n
Wolsey, Thomas, cardinal of York, chancellor of England: Erasmus praises 62; Erasmus recommends self to 352; at 1518 treaty 358n; foundation at Oxford 362, 405; patron of studies 378, 379, 380; and imperial election 403
- letter to 365
Worms: Erasmus passes through 114; Diet of 250n
Württemberg, Ulrich of, duke: woodcut portrait of *262 illustration*; expedition against 263; negotiations on fate of 330n; ruin of 399
Wycliffe, John 15

Zanddijk (Zandenburg) 42
Zasius, Udalricus: portrait of *68 illustration*; *In usus feudorum epitome* 72; *Lucubrationes* 95, 99, 101, 103; Erasmus greets 189; book at press 191
- letter from 69
- letter to 91 (*92–3 illustration*)
Zeeland: Becker in 42; Nesen's letter in 277
Zeno of Citium 343
Zobel, Theoderich, vicar-general of Mainz 151n, 152n; and Livy edition 256
Zoch, Lorenz, chancellor of Magdeburg 105
Zoilus 27
Zürich: Pucci in 95n, 195; Grossmünster school 98n
Zuutpene, Pieter, of Cassel 327

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This book

was designed by

ANTJE LINGNER

based on the series design by

ALLAN FLEMING

and was printed by

University

of Toronto

Press